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THE TWO HOMES

MRS LESLIES'
SABBATH SCHOOL BOOKS

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THE TWO HOMES:

OR,

EARNING AND SPENDING.

[Baker, Harriette Newell (Woods)]

BY

MRS. MADELINE LESLIE.

AUTHOR OF "HOUSEHOLD ANGEL," "MOTHERLESS CHILDREN," "TIM THE SCISSORS GRINDER," "ROBINS'-NEST SERIES," ETC.

"Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

BOSTON:
ANDREW F. GRAVES,
No. 24 CORNHILL.
1862.

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.B173Tw

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1862,
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To my Beloved Son,

CHARLES R. BAKER,

JUST ENTERING ON THE STAGE OF ACTIVE LIFE,

THIS SMALL VOLUME

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

IN THE HOPE THAT HE MAY FURNISH AN ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATION OF THAT LOFTY PURPOSE, CHRISTIAN INTEGRITY, AND USEFULNESS WHICH SO DISTINGUISHED ITS HERO, MR. APPLETON,

AND,

THUS PROVING THE EXCELLENCE OF ITS MOTTO, MAY REALIZE THE HIGHEST ASPIRATIONS OF HIS

Loving Mother.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE COTTAGE AND THE MANSION, ... 9

CHAPTER II.

TURNER'S STORE, ... 17

CHAPTER III.

BAD HABITS, ... 30

CHAPTER IV.

THE YOUNG ARCHITECT, ... 47

CHAPTER V.

GILBERT AT HOME, ... 68

CHAPTER VI.

DEATH AT THE COTTAGE, ... 82

CHAPTER VII.

THE NEW HOUSE, ... 100

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CONTRAST, ... 120

CHAPTER IX.

FAMILY SCENES, ... 138

CHAPTER X.

THE DRUNKEN SON, ... 159

CHAPTER XI.

THE YOUNG DESIGNER, ... 177

CHAPTER XII.

LEAVING HOME, ... 190

CHAPTER XIII.

THE UNFORTUNATE SON, ... 203

CHAPTER XIV.

SETTLING IN LIFE, ... 215

CHAPTER XV.

THE MOTHER'S DEATH, ... 228

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CONCLUSION, ... 234

THE TWO HOMES;

OR,

EARNING AND SPENDING.

CHAPTER I.

THE COTTAGE AND THE MANSION.

"The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked; but he blesseth the habitation of the just."

Henry Appleton and Gilbert Stearns had been intimate from their earliest remembrance; for the humble but neat cottage of old lady Hooper, Henry's grandmother, stood within a stone's throw of the large, substantial farm-house of Gilbert's father.

Mr. Stearns, his neighbors said, was well to do in the world, and indeed his well-tilled lands, his productive orchards, his convenient barns and out-houses, and his sleek, fat cattle, were abundant evidence of the fact.

Old lady Hooper, as she was universally called, was,

on the contrary, poor in this world's goods, though her cottage contained many tokens that she had, at some time of her life, been blessed with at least a competence.

The house was low, what is usually called a story and a half. It was, however, well built, and contained every convenience which she desired. It stood with the end to the street, a narrow gravel path leading from the gate to the front door. In the corner of the main room, which occupied half the lower story, stood an old-fashioned clock, towering with its gilt balls nearly to the ceiling. Between the windows the space was filled by a high mahogany secretary, with glass doors through which could be seen the rows of neatly-arranged books standing in order upon the shelves. Then there were small drawers underneath, hidden by the lower panel of the doors, in which the widow kept her letters, the deed of her cottage, and such other business papers as she deemed important; while the lower part of the secretary contained four ample drawers, usually filled with bed and table linen. In the corner op-

posite the clock, stood a rich, old-fashioned card-table, with heavy carved legs and clawed feet. During the long winter evenings this was drawn into the centre of the room, to hold the light by which Henry studied and his grandmother worked. The room contained also another table of cherry or oak, with two leaves folding down at its sides. This table, when not in use at meal-times, was covered with a red and green cloth, and set up at the side next the door opening into the kitchen. In addition, there were the usual number of common chairs, with one large stuffed chair in which the widow reclined when weary. This room stood facing the south, and consequently was rendered cheerful by the sun which shone into it almost all day.

Back of the parlor, or sitting-room, as they called it, was the kitchen, and also a small bed-room, entered from the kitchen, which projected a few feet from the main house, enough for a front window the south side. A narrow passage from the front door ran along by the side of the parlor, opened into it, and also into the kitchen in the rear, while between

the two back rooms was a door leading up the narrow flight of stairs into the two finished rooms in the attic.

The sitting-room was covered with a much-worn and faded but well-mended Kidderminster carpet, and the kitchen with large mats, braided by the widow's own hands. Pieces like the parlor carpet were also spread over the bed-room floor.

I have been thus particular in describing the interior of the cottage, because its arrangement had much to do in forming the character of one of the heroes of my story.

Let us turn now to the home of Gilbert.

The house was a square, upright one, with the roof running to a point from the four corners. It had also a long L, which in turn was followed by a shed, making the length of the buildings about seventy feet. Upon entering the front door, there were parlors on either side, and back of these a sitting-room and bed-room — the latter occupied by the aged parents of Mr. Stearns, who had been the original owners of the farm, but had surrendered to

their son all their right and title thereto, in consideration of his promise to take care of them while they lived. In the L was the kitchen, by far the most important room in the house, with its convenient pantry, cheese-room, and dairy adjoining.

In the second story were four large chambers, and in the attic two small ones with low Luthern windows in the roof.

The parlors were showily furnished with red figured plush chairs and lounges, large centre tables and flashy carpets. The mantel-pieces were loaded with cheap ornaments, selected and arranged with an intention of filling the required space, but exhibiting no mark of refinement and good taste. These rooms were the pride of the matron, and on no account were the children to be admitted within them. Indeed, the blinds were closely shut, the shades down, and the doors not only closed but locked three hundred and sixty out of the three hundred and sixty-five days in the year.

As a natural consequence of this disuse of the front part of the house, the front door and the hall

between the rooms was almost a superfluity, and from fall to spring the snow lay untouched upon the stone steps and the walk through the front yard leading to them.

The apartment called the sitting-room was also well-furnished with cane-seat chairs, standing stiffly against the wall, large and small tables, and a plain hair-covered sofa. This also in winter contained an air-tight stove, and was used when company accidentally called, or when a friend was invited to tea, or during the annual visit of the pastor, which usually occurred the week following Thanksgiving.

The kitchen, then, with its yellow-painted floor, its wooden chairs, its cherry desk in which the farmer kept his papers, and seated at which he did his writing, its large oaken tables, its old-fashioned settle and its ample cooking-stove, was the room in which the family ate, drank, worked; in short, spent fifteen hours out of the twenty-four.

When I say *the family*, I do not mean to include the grand-parents; for the old lady employed herself in preparing their simple meals and cooking them

over a large fire which burned upon the wide hearth, as she had learned to do fifty years before; while grandpa, as she, in common with the rest of the household called him, brought wood and water, and smoked his pipe, holding himself ready to perform any such small offices as she was too feeble to undertake.

The family proper consisted of Mr. Stearns, a portly man of fifty years, his wife, but few months his junior, four children, — three sons and a daughter, — and two servants. The youngest of the children, whose name was Gilbert, is the one with whom we have principally to do.

Having now introduced our young readers to the homes of our heroes, we must leave them to learn their characters as the story progresses, only stopping, before we close this chapter, to say that Mrs. Hooper was principally supported by a pension from Government, received in consideration of her husband's services in the Revolutionary war, added to which she knit stockings and mittens, and sometimes sewed on plain shirts for anybody who wished

her services; and that Mrs. Stearns was a bustling, hard-working woman, who, by her industry, thrift, and economy had helped to fill her husband's coffers, and therefore considered herself entitled to give an opinion upon every arrangement to be made about the farm.

Turner's Store —p. 17.

CHAPTER II.

TURNER'S STORE.

"Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men."

Henry and Gilbert resided in a large and flourishing village in one of the New England States. The town had of late received a great impetus in consequence of a railroad which passed through its centre, and connected it with large cities both east and west of it. Within three years the old-fashioned church edifice in which their fathers had worshipped for so many years had been thoroughly repaired and remodelled: for the low tower with its pointed turrets, was substituted a tall, elegant spire; in addition to this, which was universally acknowledged as a great improvement, a new and handsome hall had been erected, with stores underneath, painted one of the modern shades of brown similar to the church; and

several beautiful private dwelling-houses, built in the more tasteful and fashionable styles of architecture.

Public attention had also been called to the desirableness of beautifying their streets with rows of shade trees. In due time this was happily accomplished.

But still much of the village remained as it had been for many years. Turner's store, with its wide piazza, which in warm weather was invariably filled with loungers — its small-paned windows so covered with dust and dirt as to serve instead of shades to keep the goods from being faded by the sun — its time-worn pillars so cut, hacked, and carved with every variety of hieroglyphics as would afford curiosity to explorers in search of antiquities — its old-fashioned bar, occupying one end of the rear store — and its shelves with hoe-handles and embroideries, crank churns and mousseline de laines, cheeses and cambric muslins, boxes of cigars, papers of tobacco, glass jars containing striped sticks of candy in variety, all in neighborly proximity to each other, —

and the whole presented a marked contrast to the arrangement of similar articles at the new store.

Turner's, I am sorry to say it, was always exceedingly well patronized — certainly the piazza and the bar; though the young and enterprising merchants who hired the new building declared that they were well satisfied with their proportion of profits. The truth was, those who went to Turner's to buy anything but rum, gin, and brandy (these were cash articles) seldom paid for them, but let the account stand year after year, until all hopes of collecting it had passed away. To be sure Turner threatened again and again to give no credit, like his neighbors near the green; but, after all, these threatenings ended in smoke, for if they did not give credit they should not sell at all, and they would never send their old customers away to their dashy rivals.

During the long evenings in winter the loungers removed their seats inside the store, and there told marvellous tales, sung rude songs, and gossipped to their hearts' content, their throats ever and anon moistened by a glass of warm toddy or flip from the bar.

Perhaps, after all, but for one circumstance, Turner might have been considered a public benefactor to keep these rough, hardened men from farther mischief by confining them so effectually to his store; for they were so far gone in sin, so hardened by their continual violation of the ninth command, and so degraded were they by their profane and lewd conversation, that there was little hope of their reform. But Turner was a shrewd man, and knew very well that his old customers were burning themselves up as fast as it was in their power, with all the aid he and his bar-keeper could render them. Consequently he must be raising up some new ones. His aim was therefore to make his store as attractive as possible to boys. Whenever he visited the city to replenish his stock of the ardent, he always had an eye out, as he expressed it, for caricatures, or other rude pictures, or verses, likely to make sport for the young.

"I remember," he used to say to the boys, "when I was a boy myself, and how tickled I was when the old man brought me something lively from town."

One evening, Henry Appleton was sitting with his

grandmother, busily engaged in studying his lessons for the next day, when the shed door softly opened, and some one was heard entering the kitchen.

"That's Gilbert," cried Henry, starting to open the parlor door. "I know his step. I guess he's come for me to go to the store with him."

"Come, Henry," whispered the other, "I'm going down in town; ask your grandmother to let you go. We have real fun down there."

"May I go?" asked Henry, seeing she had overheard the request.

"Where, my dear?"

"To Turner's."

"I thought you had your lessons to learn."

"I might go, and then get them when I come back. I should like to," he urged in a pleading tone.

"I am sorry to disappoint you, my dear; but I had rather you wouldn't."

The boy hung his head, and looked rather sullen; and Gilbert, whispering, "I say it's too bad," shut the door and ran away.

Henry sat down to his lessons again; but it was

evident that his interest in them was gone for the time. He was following, in imagination, his companion to the store, where he knew that a fresh supply of pictures from the city would furnish occasion for many a joke. At length he ceased for a moment rattling his pencil against the slate, and asked —

"Why don't you want me to go to the store, grandma? Most all the boys go there. I don't see what hurt there is in it."

"When you have lived a few years longer I hope you will see the harm in it. In the meantime you must be willing to trust me that I would not refuse you unless it were for your good."

The old lady spoke firmly but tenderly.

Henry sat for a moment gazing steadily at her as if his mind was intent upon some subject, and then resumed his studies, in which he was soon apparently so much engaged as to forget his recent disappointment.

In the meantime, Gilbert ran as fast as he could go to the store, provoked with himself for having wasted the time to call for his companion, and passed

the evening till a late hour in listening to conversation which could only defile him, in laughing at jokes at his neighbors, and joining in scandal against those who considered themselves too good to join their company at the store.

At the close of the evening, Henry looked up and said, with a smile —

"I suppose I shall feel better to-morrow morning for having staid at home. See, grandma, I have learned my geography lesson, and done all those sums," showing a slate well covered with figures.

"I have no doubt you will feel better and happier when you stand in your classes," said the good lady, pleasantly; "but come now, my dear, bring the Bible, and we will have prayers. It is getting late."

It was nearly ten when Gilbert ran hastily into his father's yard. He hoped he could go in through the back door, and slip off unperceived to his room in the attic. His conscience told him that he had not been profitably employed, and he knew his mother would scold him for being out so late. She heard him as he opened the door, and called out —

"Is that you, Gilbert?" and then added, as he made no reply, "Where have you been, you naughty boy?"

"Only to the store."

"What did you go there for?" asked his father, looking up from a paper where he was examining the market-prices.

"To hear the fun, that's all."

"Well, don't you let me catch you going there again."

Mrs. Stearns had been grumbling all the evening, because Lucy had gone out without saying by your leave; and Gilbert was away, so that she had no one to help her pare her apples and get ready for baking. If her husband had taken the boy's part, as she expected he would do, she would have given him a good scolding; but as it was she only said —

"Well, come now, sit down here and tell me about it. There, take that knife on the table, and cut, while I finish paring."

Gilbert repeated the least offensive part of the

gossip, at which his mother, and even his father, laughed heartily.

"I don't believe there's any hurt in your going once in a while," said his mother, as he took the lamp to go to bed; "only don't go when I have anything for you to do, and you must always ask leave."

Henry Appleton was exceedingly fond of drawing. It was his greatest delight, when his lessons were learned, to borrow a drawing-card of his teacher and copy it upon his slate. Occasionally she would call him to the desk, and give him some instruction about shading or perspective.

One Saturday morning she called at his grandmother's, and told him she had come to ask a favor of him. She wished to go and spend the Sabbath with a friend who was sick. The gentleman in whose family she boarded, had offered her the use of his horse and carryall; but she had no one to drive her there and bring the horse back.

Henry could hardly contain his joy.

"I should admire to go," he exclaimed; "and I know grandma would have no objection."

"It is very pleasant," suggested the lady; "why can't you go, too?"

And so in half an hour they started off for C——, a pleasant town four miles distant.

Early Monday morning, according to agreement, Henry appeared before the door of the house where he had left her, to bring her back in time for school. It was a cold, rainy morning, and she feared he would be inclined to forget his promise. She was much pleased, therefore, at his promptness, and during the ride home conversed with the boy, leading him to talk freely about his plans for the future.

"I should like to be a painter first best," said he, growing quite animated, "and a carpenter second best."

The lady smiled at the dissimilarity between the two.

"I like to draw pictures of houses," rejoined the boy, "and I think I should like to make a house."

"Did you ever draw a plan of a house?" she inquired, "that is, make a drawing of the ground-floor, and measure it by the scale?"

"No, ma'am; I never tried that."

"I have a book at home which would show you exactly what I mean. It contains a great many plans of houses, and different styles of architecture, with the different names attached to each. When I have an opportunity, I will send and get it for you. If you wish to be a carpenter, it will aid you very much."

Henry thanked her warmly, and soon after they reached home.

It was more than a fortnight later that Miss Woodard called him after school, and gave him a small parcel, saying —

"Here is the book I promised you, and also a small volume on linear drawing, which I studied when I was a child. I have written your name in the first; but my brother says if you are really intending to make an architect, you ought to have the large work of which this is only an abridgment."

As soon as Henry had done his night's work,— cut kindlings and green wood for his grandmother, filled her pails with water, looked for the eggs, and locked

up the hen-house,— he sat down to examine his book until tea was ready. He found the first plan very simple, with full explanations as to its construction, and then followed a representation of the house when completed. It was of the Doric form of architecture, with plain columns supporting the roof in front.

Henry was so absorbed that his grandmother spoke twice before he seemed to comprehend that supper was ready. In a month he had not only studied the book from beginning to end, but had made copies of all the plans into an old blank book given him by his grandmother.

In the meantime, Gilbert had not only become a daily visitor at the store, but had begun to taste a little of the warm cordial he heard so highly recommended. And not only this, but he had induced his father to accompany him and hear some of the lively stories that were sure to be repeated there. It had indeed long been true that Mr. Stearns had tired of sitting evening after evening by the kitchen fire, listening to his wife as she complained of the children, of the servants, and not unfrequently of himself

— of her own hard lot, that she made a slave of herself, working like a dog from morning till night, and nobody caring a penny whether she killed herself or not.

The first night he excused himself by saying that he wished to learn how the election was progressing, and some of the old heads at Turner's could tell him which party would succeed in having their candidate elected, and save him the trouble of reading all the papers.

Could Mrs. Stearns have foreseen the consequences of that one evening at Turner's, she might indeed have wept bitter tears — both for her husband and her son.

CHAPTER III.

BAD HABITS.

"Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge."

One year passed rapidly away, bearing with it the register of the recording angel.

To the inhabitants of the little cottage, time had flown with noiseless wing: old lady Hooper, happy in watching the improvement in her grandson, diligent in sowing the good seed, and trustful that according to the promise, she should reap an abundant harvest; Henry, in storing his mind with knowledge, in learning that most important lesson — to conquer himself.

He was now fifteen, and his school days ended. In a few weeks he was to begin his work as apprentice to Mr. Morse, a carpenter residing a quarter of a mile from his grandmother. In consideration of

old lady Hooper's lonely situation, Mr. Morse had readily consented to pay a small sum for his board, instead of taking him into his own family.

During the past year, Henry had devoted himself attentively to his studies, especially to such branches as would be of service to him in his chosen employment. Mrs. Hooper had carefully impressed upon his mind that "knowledge is power," and would be sure to bring him success; that if he was to be a mechanic, she wished him to be an intelligent one, capable of acting well his part in the great drama of life. She had also sought to cultivate his taste for the beautiful, to render him polite and refined in his manners and appearance. Believing this to be required by Scripture, she often repeated to him the passage, "Be pitiful, be courteous." Her manner of life, as I have already mentioned, had a powerful effect upon the boy's character. When he returned from school, he was always sure to find a pleasant room to sit in, with neat furniture tastefully arranged, a pair of slippers to exchange for his thick shoes or boots; when he was summoned to a meal,

the table was covered with a snowy cloth, and laid with all the care that it would have been had they been expecting distinguished guests. Though the fare was very simple, it was well cooked; and the old lady had the rare art of seasoning her food so that, although frugal, it relished well.

For many years it had been a fruitful subject of speculation among the neighbors, especially with the family of Mr. Stearns, how the old lady, being as poor as she was, could live so well.

"I wonder," said Mrs. Stearns, "that she should use her parlor so common. Why, I never saw her sitting down in the kitchen in my life, and she is bringing up her boy with the airs and manners of a gentleman."

"He is not a bit proud, though," suggested Gilbert.

"Well, I should like to have you tell me, if you can, what he has to be proud of?" persisted his mother.

"I think he has a good deal," urged the boy. "He is the best scholar in school, and is sure to get

all the first prizes at the close of the term. Then he is real good looking, and always dresses just as neat as a pin. The collars that he wears every day, look better than mine that I wear to meeting."

"I can't think," exclaimed Lucy, "what it is that makes Mrs. Hooper appear so different from all the other neighbors. She always speaks so pleasant, and looks so nice in her close cap and smooth hair."

"I should like to see our table look as hers does," added the boy. "Why, I have been in there again and again, just as they were going to tea. I do believe they have on their best things every night. I've seen the little silver sugar-bowl and cream-cup many a time."

"It's wicked extravagance. They'll come to want, and they'll deserve to."

"I don't care," cried Lucy, petulantly, "it's just the way I mean to do when I'm married. I'm real sick of living in the kitchen as we do, and eating like pigs. I declare, I'm ashamed to have one of the girls call here. We might just as well have no parlors,

nor nice things at all, if we are never to have the good of them."

"Hold your tongue, Lucy Stearns!" retorted her mother, angrily. "I should like to know who asked your opinion," — adding, after a moment, as she saw her daughter's cheek flush crimson — "I don't see what is the matter with you lately."

"I know," said Gilbert, laughing. "All the girls but Lucy have beaus, and I suppose she don't like it."

"I could have a beau if I wanted one, Mr. Gilbert," rejoined the girl, spitefully; "but I never will ask one to come here while I have to sit in the kitchen with him. I declare, I think it's shameful. There's Adeline Morse is engaged; and they have a fire in the parlor every night. I don't see why I can't."

"If I were you, Lucy, I would turn the settle round, and take James in behind it," suggested Gilbert, mischievously, as his mother angrily left the room.

"Well, isn't it too bad, though," continued the

girl, in a softened tone. "I should rather be as poor as old lady Hooper, and live as they do."

"I don't know," replied Gilbert, doubtfully; "I never feel at home in there. I have often tried to get Henry to stay in the kitchen, but he only laughs. I never feel quite at home in their parlor."

"That's just what I say; and you never will feel at home till you go into one at least once a month. We shall always be clod-hoppers as long as we live, just to pay for being brought up so."

"Perhaps it is that; but I never thought of it. You know last term, when the teacher had his party, I staid in the entry most all the time, just looking in when I could get a chance; and there was Henry, walking round just as if he was at home, talking and laughing with the ladies. I heard ever so many people say, 'What a fine fellow Henry Appleton is! I should think his grandmother would be proud of him.'"

On the day before his apprenticeship commenced, Henry returned home from an errand on which he had been sent, and exclaimed —

"Did you know, grandma, that Gilbert has concluded to be a carpenter? I'm real glad of it."

"So am I," was the gentle reply; "for I think it will be a good thing for him to be bound to some regular employment. I wish he could be persuaded to leave off going to the store, and sipping a little spirit."

"Do you suppose what he takes hurts him, grandma?"

"Perhaps not; but don't you see that he is forming a taste which will gradually lead him on to take a larger and a larger quantity, until he becomes a drunkard? I can well remember when many of those old men at Turner's store were bright, active boys like Gilbert; but they placed themselves in the way of temptation, and now —"

"They are real old topers," said the boy, interrupting her. "I'll try," he added, a glow of generous enthusiasm spreading over his countenance, "I'll try and get him to join the Temperance Society. I'm sorry, though, that Mr. Stearns goes there so much. Gilbert told me once he was the

first one who persuaded him to go. I'm afraid he'll be sorry for that night's work."

For three days the boys worked steadily, side by side, in the shop of Mr. Morse, who congratulated himself that he had two excellent apprentices. On the evening of the last day, when they were putting away their tools, he said to them —

"Here are some tickets to the Lyceum lectures. I have bought a set for each of you. The first one is this evening."

"Thank you, sir," replied Henry, "I should be delighted to go."

Gilbert did not appear so much pleased, and at length said —

"I'm engaged this evening, sir; but I thank you all the same."

"Where are you going?" inquired Henry, in a disappointed tone.

"Only to the store."

The fact was, Gilbert had already acquired a taste not only for the drink, but for the gossip and excite-

ment he found at Turner's; and he thirsted for them after being absent three whole days.

"O, Gilly!" cried the other, affectionately putting his hand on his companion's arm, "don't go there. I've a very special reason for asking you not to go."

"Out with it, then."

"Well, let's take a walk down this street; I guess we shall have time; and I had rather go without my supper than not to talk with you. Now confess," he added, as they walked on, "that you like to take a little liquor with the men."

"I like it well enough. I don't see why I should deny it."

"And ar'n't you afraid you'll get to like it better and better, until you come to be a drunkard?"

"No, not a bit afraid of that. Do you think I want to have great pimples all over my face, and such a red nose as those old drunkards have?" and the youth laughed heartily.

But Henry was too much in earnest to laugh. He repeated to his companion much that his grandmother had said about these very men; and that

they began, as he had, by tasting a little with the older ones.

Before they reached home, Gilbert began to look soberly at the subject, to confess that there might be some danger, and to promise not to go there again — certainly not until they had talked more upon the subject.

In the evening, Mr. Morse was much gratified to see both of his new apprentices among the audience. The bright, animated smile with which Henry regarded his companion, led him to imagine that he had persuaded Gilbert to join him ; and the next day he took an opportunity to question him upon the subject.

"Where was Stearns going last night?" he inquired.

"To Turner's, sir."

"What! to pass the evening?"

"Yes, sir ; but I am trying to persuade him to stop going there. He's promised not to go again until I've talked more with him."

"I'm surprised," continued his employer, "to

know that such has been his habit; nothing would have induced me to have taken a boy who had habitually visited a rum-shop."

"I'm almost sure he'll drop it, sir," urged Henry, with some warmth.

"Well, my boy, I heartily wish you success in your noble purpose. If I can be of any aid to you, let me know."

Henry did not rest until he had gained Gilbert's consent to allow his grandmother to explain to him the evils of visiting such a place as Turner's; and her kind entreaty, added to the earnest pleading of his young friend, at length availed.

"You care but little for spirit now," he urged, "and can stop as well as not; but do you suppose old Manning or Roper would think they could live a day without rum?"

"No; and I'm determined to quit it at once and forever; so you may have the credit of it if I ever make anything."

"To God be all the glory, my dear boy," said the widow, seriously. "He it is who helps you make

the promise, and to him you must look for strength to keep it."

"I'm kinder sorry," said Gilbert, sadly, "that I ever tried to get father to go there."

Both the old lady and her grandson were silent, as they did not wish him to speak against his parents.

"Mother scolds worse than ever," he said, presently, "and complains that he don't attend to business as he used to do; and he's always finding fault with everything about the house."

The old lady sighed.

"Well," said she, "perhaps when he sees you have given up going there, he'll consent to follow so worthy an example."

In a few weeks Providence accomplished what his son's influence had failed to do. Mr. Stearns, in descending the long ladder from his hay-mow to the barn floor, fell and broke his leg. When questioned by the doctor, he said he was seized with dizziness; but the good man judged from his breath that gin was the cause of the dizziness, and forbade the use

of anything of the kind, lest it should bring on inflammation in the limb.

The resolution of Gilbert to give up once and forever the intoxicating cup was persevered in, to the great delight of his young friend. They passed pleasantly through the term of their apprenticeship until Henry, who was nearly a year younger than Gilbert, had reached his twentieth birthday. In about three months, then, he should be left alone, his companion having attained his majority. He had become a very finished workman, and his master wished to retain him in his employ. For nearly a month he had been employing his leisure time in doing some nice work in the shop, for which he expected to get a good price. This evening it was finished; and he asked Mr. Morse to examine it before it was sent home.

The gentleman did so; walked round on one side and then on the other, making no remark or comment until he had seen every part. At length he turned to the expectant workman, who stood by,

flushed with the consciousness of having done his best, and said, earnestly —

"I am proud of you, Henry. That piece of work is executed in the very best style. I shall be well pleased to have it said that it came from my shop."

He then took out his pocket-book, and gave the young man nearly double what he had agreed to do, saying —

"I shall hope, when your time is out, to make it for your interest to remain with me."

The same evening Gilbert called to invite him to go to a party in the town, adding —

"A few of us are forming a club; and now that you are in cash I want you to join us: indeed, we can't do without you, for we need one a little more learned than the rest of us, and all are agreed that you would exactly suit our purpose."

Henry laughingly held up a large octavo, saying —

"You are too late. I spent my money before I reached home; indeed, it was to purchase this book that I have worked so hard of late."

"What an extravagant fellow!" exclaimed the other. "Why, this book must have cost you twenty dollars!"

"No — only fifteen; and I really needed the book."

"In your circumstances, to spend fifteen dollars for a book is really wicked."

"But you see, my dear fellow, I intend it shall be the means of bringing fifteen thousand."

Gilbert stared a moment, and then burst into a hearty laugh; while even his grandmother looked astonished. Gilbert presently, however, turned away, saying —

"Won't you go, then? The fellows will all be disappointed."

"I can't, indeed; but stop a moment. I want to ask you a plain question. How many cigars do you smoke in a day?"

"Not over three, and sometimes only two."

"How much do you give for them?"

"They average about four cents apiece."

"And how much does your tobacco cost?"

"Oh, only the merest trifle."

"Say ten cents a week?"

"I should think not over that."

"Henry took out his pencil, drew a paper toward him which lay on the table, and began to figure up the amount.

"There," he exclaimed, "you call me extravagant for buying a useful book; and yet see the amount you spend every year, taking your lowest calculation."

Gilbert looked upon the paper, and read with astonishment that the sum total would be nearly fifty dollars.

"How's that!" he exclaimed. I don't believe you have calculated it right."

"See for yourself, then. Three cigars a day (and you say you sometimes use four), at four cents each, would be twelve cents."

"Yes, that's right."

"Well, then, multiply that by three hundred and sixty-five, and you have the sum of forty-three dollars and eighty cents."

Gilbert stood still as if paralyzed, and Henry went on —

"Then you say you spend ten cents a week for tobacco. There are fifty-two weeks in a year: ten times fifty-two are five dollars and twenty cents. Add this to forty-three dollars and eighty cents, and you have the amount of forty-nine dollars."

Gilbert started to run from the room, but Henry caught hold of him, saying, with a merry laugh —

"Stay; I haven't half done with you yet. Cigars and tobacco, instead of being of any real service to you, are very injurious, and often produce consumption."

"If that's all you've got to say, I'll risk them," cried his companion, "and myself too, if I can keep out of your clutches. Why, I shall never be able to put a cigar into my mouth again, without thinking of fifty dollars."

He shut the door and was gone. Henry returned to his book, which he examined till a late hour, his grandmother often looking up from her knitting and regarding him with pleased attention.

CHAPTER IV.

THE YOUNG ARCHITECT.

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord."

Mr. Stearns, whom we left confined to his bed by a broken limb, had been compelled to abstinence while under the care of the doctor; but long before he was able to visit his old haunt, Turner's store, he obtained from it a supply for his use at home.

It was a great triumph to Mr. Turner that he had been able to enclose Mr. Stearns in his coils; and he looked confidently forward to the time when the large farm, formerly the best tilled in the town, should pass into his hands. For two or three years this seemed to be as far from his grasp as ever, for Mr. Stearns never ordered a glass of toddy without putting the money on the counter to pay for it, though Turner often said —

"Don't trouble yourself, Mr. Stearns. Let me

set it down on the slate, and pay once a week or so."

But at length the land, for want of care, did not yield as much as formerly; the rye and wheat crop utterly failed, the potatoes rotted in the ground, and the money did not flow into the pockets of the farmer as in other years. Not having the cash in his pocket, of course he could not pay it out, and so it happened that Mr. Stearns's name began to appear in Turner's book of accounts, and there it was likely to remain until his whole property was consumed; for at this time he was so besotted by the constant use of rum that he could do no business, and indeed passed the most of his days at the store.

This being the state of his father's affairs, of course Gilbert had long ago given up the idea of receiving aid from him when he should attain his majority. Within a few months he had engaged himself in marriage to a showy-looking, showily-dressed milliner who was worth a thousand dollars. He had met her at a country ball, was much fasci-

nated with her beauty and gay appearance, and after a few weeks' acquaintance proposed marriage. The offer was accepted, and Stearns was voted by his club to be a lucky member.

The evening before his birth-day, Mr. Morse invited both his apprentices to his house, when he expressed his full satisfaction with their conduct during the whole term they had been in his employ, and ended by proposing to take them into partnership with him on very favorable terms.

Henry could scarcely express his gratitude at this unexpected offer.

"You forget," said he, "that I have still nine months to serve you as apprentice."

"My memory is better than you think, my young friend. I have watched your progress so far with much satisfaction; and it is with great cheerfulness that I give up three fourths of a year in the hope of retaining you for life. Don't decide to-night," he added, as Henry began to express the pleasure such a connection would give him. "Consult your friends; and let me know to-morrow evening, when

I have taken the liberty to invite a few persons to meet you here."

"Miss Weston received her card to-night," he added, turning to Gilbert; "for your sake I shall be happy to make her acquaintance. As for you, Henry, in return for your want of confidence in me as to the name of your lady love, I have omitted to invite her; but tell your grandmother I cannot take a refusal from her, and shall send a carriage to the cottage at an early hour."

"I accept in her name as well as for the other lady you spoke of," answered Henry, with a rosy blush.

The next evening the young man walked into the parlor with old lady Hooper leaning on his arm, the good woman wholly unconscious of the envy she was exciting by the tenderness and care she was receiving from one acknowledged to be the handsomest man in the room.

Gilbert appeared, evidently, not quite at his ease, though he tried to imitate the confidence and self-possession of the tall, richly-dressed lady by his

side. For the first time Henry was introduced to Miss Weston, though he had often met her in the street. Under the circumstances it was natural that they should regard each other attentively, and the young man, after a short conversation with the lady, turned away with a sigh of regret that his friend should have made such a choice.

On the contrary, she was piqued with herself that her hand was not free, supposing it impossible that Mr. Appleton could be insensible to her charms, and having discernment enough to realize at once that he was every way superior to his friend.

During the evening the company were more than once startled by a loud laugh, proceeding from Miss Weston's lips, followed by the expression of sentiments not the most refined. Henry, meanwhile, was secretly sympathising with his friend at conduct which he thought must be extremely mortifying to him; while Gilbert was regarding himself with much complacency as having been the means of introducing to the company one who excited so much attention.

In the course of conversation with Mrs. Hooper,

Mr. Morse repeated his wish of taking in his young apprentices as partners in business.

"There can be but one answer to such a proposal," returned the old lady, gratefully — "certainly not in our case. My grandson was so much gratified at your unexpected kindness that he talks of nothing else."

"I hope it may be equally advantageous to both of us," added the gentleman. "I confess I am somewhat selfish in the offer; for I foresee that Henry will take a high stand in business. He has talents of the best order, and under good cultivation, too."

"And how is the other apprentice?" inquired the lady, glancing toward a group where Miss Weston, with Mr. Stearns by her side, was talking in a loud and excited tone.

"A very steady, industrious workman of the common order. He can accomplish more of rough work in a day than any other man in the shop; but cannot be trusted with nice jobs. Just the man we want for a certain part of our business."

The evening passed, and Gilbert evidently avoided being alone with his master; but just before he left he approached the gentleman, and said —

"I have not yet decided in regard to the subject of last night's conversation, but will call upon you in the morning."

The truth was this. Never suspecting that Mr. Morse would make so generous a proposal, he had partly engaged a shop at the other end of the street, intending to set up business for himself. He felt sure that it would be greatly for his interest to join with Henry in the new firm; but he had now another to consult, and the lady at once vetoed the partnership. Wholly ignorant of business, she yet considered herself qualified to decide on the merits of the case.

"Why, don't you see," she urged, "that if you are in Mr. Morse's shop, the profits will be divided between you and them; whereas if you are alone, you will have the whole? Then it's a great deal more respectable to be the head of the firm; you take at once a good standing in society. Besides, I

have often heard you complain that Henry was slow and puttering, and ought not to have equal profits with yourself."

In return, Gilbert endeavored to convince her that, if he went in as one of the partners, he should be sure at once of a good run of business, as Mr. Morse had long been established, and had the confidence of the community, but if alone he must run the risk of obtaining jobs; and that if Henry was slow he was nice, and sure to give satisfaction to his employers. All was in vain. The lady had made up her mind to be married to Gilbert Stearns, carpenter and jobber, and not to Morse, Stearns & Appleton; and she could not be turned from her purpose. She pouted, twirled her rings, reverted to her thousand dollars, and finally prevailed. Gilbert was therefore obliged to go and impart his decision to Mr. Morse.

The gentleman was somewhat surprised, and endeavored to turn him from his purpose; but of course the young man felt obliged to be firm. He was much gratified, however, to receive the assur-

ance of good wishes for his success, and a promise of sending him jobs they were unable to undertake.

For nearly a year there had been talk in the village of the necessity of a new Town Hall, and also a building for the High School. A committee had some months before this time been chosen to report upon the subject, and also to examine similar edifices in other towns.

Without imparting his intention to any one, save his grandmother, who entered into all his projects with great interest, young Appleton had been devoting himself with great assiduity to drawing plans which would at once come within the probable limits of expenditure, and at the same time be an honor and ornament to the town. It was to prepare himself for this undertaking that he had been so eager to purchase the new book. Now the plans were completed, and lying together ready to be submitted to the committee. The young architect examined them carefully again and again, to be sure that all was right, that nothing had been omitted, and that his estimation of the expense was accurate and fair.

His form expanded and his cheek flushed as he could imagine the surprise of the gentlemen when they were assured he was entitled to the whole credit. Of course if he was successful in persuading them to adopt these plans, he would be employed to do the job, and his reputation would be established.

Meanwhile, his first duty was to consult his new partner, and inform him of what he had done. He therefore took an early opportunity to invite him to pass an evening at the cottage for the transaction of business.

Mr. Morse's curiosity was quickly changed to astonishment and delighted surprise as the young architect unfolded his plans, and disclosed his long cherished project. He wiped his glasses, carefully adjusted them upon his nose, making a vigorous effort meanwhile to clear his throat, and then sat down to a close examination of the young man's work. As on a former occasion, he made no remark or comment, but listened with ever increasing interest and attention to the explanations of the different parts, until the whole was before him. Then

he sat for some minutes intently regarding the paper containing a sketch of the brackets and coving, seemingly unconscious that two pairs of eyes were fixed earnestly upon him, when suddenly starting from his chair, he exclaimed —

"They will be accepted; I am sure of it. From that time Morse & Appleton must be equal partners. No! *no!!*" he added, as Henry began to expostulate; "you will more than double my business. You will be an honor to the firm. I must be just. But let me caution you, my young friend, not to be proud of your success, though I fear I shall be proud of you. Leave that part to your grandmother and to me. But when do you mean to present these to the committee?"

"As early as possible."

"I will talk with the chairman, then, and propose that a meeting, called specifically for the purpose of receiving plans, be held sometime next week. Let an invitation be extended to architects to be present with their estimates upon any plans they wish to offer or recommend."

"But I fear in that case —"

"Never fear, my dear fellow! I know what I'm about. I wish I were as sure of Stearns's success as I am of getting those jobs."

"He told me, to-day, that he was to be married next week," said Henry.

"Keep up good courage; your turn will come by-and-bye."

"I am quite contented for the present," rejoined the young man, turning affectionately to his grandmother. "Poor Gilbert has never known the blessing of a good home, as I have."

The committee-meeting was appointed on Friday of the next week; and until that time Henry could hardly be expected to set himself about any new business. He presented himself, however, every day at the shop, and appeared to the journeymen no different from what he had done when he was an apprentice. In truth, he hardly realized any change, his mind was so absorbed in revolving his chances of success in his new effort. As it drew nearer the time he became restless and anxious, often wonder-

ing that he had ever given a thought to the possibility of succeeding. He longed for an encouraging word from his more sanguine partner; but Mr. Morse was absent from the shop, and seemed busy with his own plans.

On Thursday evening he returned from the weekly conference-meeting, which he regularly attended with his grandmother; and, contrary to his usual custom, sat down before the fire instead of preparing to read.

"You are too warm," said the old lady, placing her hand upon his head.

"I wish to-morrow were over," he exclaimed, not noticing her remark.

"Time is too precious to be wished away, my dear," was the serious but gentle reply.

"I was sorry the moment I gave utterance to the words; but I feel very anxious about the result of the meeting. It seems to me that if my plans are rejected, I had better give up being an architect at once; for I have exerted myself to the utmost upon them."

"Cast your care upon the Lord, my son."

"But, grandma, I don't think you realize how important it is to me to succeed. If I fail, I shall be worse off than Stearns, who never tried."

"I do not think so. Your endeavors will be approved by the committee, even if they see cause to reject them in this case. Then this village is not the only place where new edifices are to be erected. If you do not build here, the gentlemen, perhaps, will recommend your plan elsewhere."

"Then only think what a chance I shall lose of going in as equal partner with Mr. Morse. I almost wish he hadn't told me until the decision had been made. The disappointment of that will be great enough without the other added to it."

"You remember, my dear, who has said, "'Cast thy burden on the Lord; he will sustain thee.'"

"Do you think it right to pray to be directed about little things, that concern only ourselves?"

"Yes, child; I am sure it is. In his providential dealings with his people, God directs every event, however minute, to work out their good and his glory. He watches every sparrow that falleth to

the ground, and counts the very hairs of our heads."

"But now, in my case, grandma, you know ever since I was a little boy I have been anxious to distinguish myself in whatever I undertook. For a long time I fear it was at least a vain ambition to excel for the sake of excelling; but after I began to love the Saviour I wanted to become good and to be useful to my fellow-creatures. I thought if I made myself respected, I could have far more influence than if I lived along without trying to be anything."

"You mean, if you use and cultivate your talents rather than hide them in a napkin."

"Yes, ma'am, that's just it. So I prayed to be blessed in all my honest efforts to acquire riches and honor, and that I might always have a disposition to use these to advance the good cause. Now, since I begun to draw those plans, I don't think there has been one night but I have asked God to prosper the work of my hands; for I could see then, as I do now, that my prospects for life would be far

more flattering if I made myself a good name as an architect, than if I continued in the more ordinary labors of a carpenter. Then I resolved to make use of all my influence in a manner to show my gratitude to him. But lately I fear I have thought too much of myself, and have sometimes doubted whether it is right to pray so much for success in our own little plans — whether it is not selfish."

"A suggestion from the devil, my dear! If you have acted upon it, I see clearly the reason you are left to despondence and anxiety. You have taken the burden upon your own shoulders, instead of casting it upon the Lord."

Henry rose instantly, brought out the Bible from the secretary, and began to read, —

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, thy face, Lord, will I seek. Hide not thy face from me; put not thy servant away in anger; thou hast been my

help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation!"

Then, kneeling down, he poured out his whole heart before God. When he arose his gloom had disappeared; he had left his care at the foot of the throne, and his soul was at peace. He kissed his grandmother tenderly, retired to his bed, and soon was sweetly asleep.

When the time came for him to accompany Mr. Morse to the committee-room, he was calm and self-possessed; so that his partner, who had expected some exhibition of anxiety, gazed at him with surprise. As they approached the spot Mr. Morse said:

"I see you are pretty sure of success."

"On the contrary, I never was so much inclined to the belief that they will consider the buildings too expensive; but I know I shall have them if it is best for me. Perhaps One who can judge better than I, foresees that it would make me proud. At any rate, I can cheerfully leave the event in his hand."

Though they were prompt to the hour when the meeting was to be opened, yet they found a middle-aged man present, with a large roll open before him, which one of the gentlemen was examining. Mr. Morse and his companion were requested to wait in the next room. Presently, however, they were summoned, as the plan presented did not at all meet their wishes. The senior party, who was already acquainted with all the gentlemen, and indeed had been in consultation with them through the week, now introduced his companion, and requested him to proceed at once to the explanation of his drawings.

Three hours later the gentlemen were still at their work, having discussed every point with the young architect, as thoroughly as if the terms had been already agreed upon. Henry's hopes began to rise.

"Surely," he thought, "they would not spend so much time, unless they saw some prospect of taking it."

On the contrary, Mr. Morse began to fear, from their delay, that they did not regard the drawings

as favorably as he had expected. But presently it appeared that they were waiting for a distinguished architect, who came bustling into the room apologizing for being behind time.

"These are the plans to which I alluded," said the chairman, rather abruptly taking them from Henry, and placing them before the gentleman. "Mr. Morse, will you explain them?"

"O ho!" said the other; "from Bond. I recognize his style."

The chairman glanced archly at Mr. Morse.

"Good! very good!" he continued. "But"—he stopped—"have you been limited as to the cost? because I doubt whether they can be put up at the sum named in the estimates. Bond, of course, will expect to superintend the job, and he doesn't work for nothing, you know," he added, with a laugh.

"Then you recommend it with that exception?" demanded one of the committee.

"Of course I do. I only wish you had applied to me a little sooner. I should have liked the honor of putting up those buildings myself. If the work is

done strictly after the plans, they will be a great ornament to your village. When do you propose to commence them?"

"Immediately — as soon as they have been accepted by the town."

"Well," said the gentleman, buttoning up his coat, "I shall see Bond to-morrow, and shall congratulate him on having two such handsome buildings to erect."

"Stop," said the chairman; "before you go I want to introduce to you a new candidate for public notice and favor. This is young Mr. Appleton, the architect whose drawings you have so highly approved."

"But I thought you said they were Bond's."

"No; you assumed that."

"I suppose, then, you are a pupil of his?" turning to Henry.

"No, sir; I never had the pleasure of seeing the gentleman, though I have often wished to do so."

"Well, I have only time now to say that you have a decided genius for that sort of thing, and that you

are just the man I've been in search of for a partner. What say you?"

"I thank you exceedingly for your encouragement, sir. I am already in partnership with Mr. Morse."

"He's a lucky dog, then. Well, when you want a recommendation, you're welcome to use my name. Good-bye, Mr. Appleton."

And without noticing one of the others, the eccentric individual left the room.

CHAPTER V.

GILBERT AT HOME.

"I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the works of their own hands."

The marriage of Mr. Gilbert Stearns and Miss Phebe Weston was celebrated in great style. Embossed cards in silvered envelopes were sent to their numerous friends; and on reaching the gay scene, cake and wine in abundance were circulated through the evening. The event was duly recorded in the papers, and the happy pair, on their return from their wedding trip, settled themselves comfortably in their new home. This was a house hired for a few months, for its proximity to his shop. Hitherto his approaching marriage and the arrangements necessarily preceding it, had prevented any endeavors to obtain employment. Now, on his return, his surprise can readily be imagined when he heard that

contracts had been signed between the building committee and the new firm of Morse & Appleton for both the Town Hall and High-School House. And what added tenfold to his astonishment, was the rumor that Mr. Morse had obtained these lucrative jobs through the influence of his fellow-apprentice, who was the architect. He inquired again and again as to the truth of the report, of friends whom he met; but always received the same reply:

"Where have you been that you don't know? The architect is Henry Appleton, Morse's new partner."

As a consequence of all this, the young bridegroom went home in not the most pleasant humor, to carry the news to his wife.

"I don't believe it," she said; "you were always intimate with him, and of course must have known it if he had been at work at the drawings. I think it altogether probable he stole them from some prints, and had the meanness to call them his own."

"You don't know Henry as well as I do, or you wouldn't say so," replied her husband. "I was a

fool not to go into the firm when he did. I might now have had steady work for months. I have you to thank for that step."

"And I should advise the same again, Mr. Stearns," rejoined the lady, tartly. "They only wanted you there for their own convenience, because they could get more work out of you than out of any man in the shop. If you had any sense, you'd see it yourself, and thank me for it instead of flinging it in my face."

"I have sense enough from this time to attend to my own business," muttered Gilbert, leaving the house.

Poor fellow! he had ample time to brood over his disappointment, for day after day passed and still no business; while the popularity of the new firm was ever on the increase, and customers flocked to their shop. A dozen additional journeymen had been hired, and were already at work under Henry's supervision upon the frames of the new edifices. The whole town was alive with excitement, and no slight impatience to see the style of architecture of

the new buildings. Framing, covering, shingling, and clapboarding was work in which Gilbert excelled, and his old master missed him exceedingly in this pressure of business. He heard that the latter had as yet no employment; and one day, after consulting Henry, he called upon him with the intention of engaging him as head journeyman.

Gilbert unfortunately was absent, having gone to a neighboring town to see if he could find anything to do there. Mr. Morse, however, made known his errand to Mrs. Stearns, and requested her to ask her husband to call at the shop.

"Mr. Stearns is so much engaged I hardly think he will be able to call at present," returned the lady. "He is preparing to build a house for himself."

"Indeed," said the gentleman, with a smile; "I was not aware that he had any intention of the kind."

For some days she had been urging her husband to improve the time, while he had no work, in building a house on his own account, and then to take advantage of some favorable opportunity to

sell it; but he was unwilling to burden himself with so heavy a debt. She determined to say nothing of Mr. Morse's call, but to urge him to proceed at once with his new house.

There were, however, many objections to this. Gilbert was not sufficiently expert at figures to make an estimate of the cost of lumber, brick, stone-work, glass, etc., etc., so as to know how much the house would cost, neither was he capable of drawing his plan. How then should he proceed? He was too proud to confide his troubles to his wife. He would not ask Henry to advise him. In the mean-time something must be done. He went out to look at a lot of land which his wife was anxious to have him buy, and before the close of another week had hired money to pay for it, and also to proceed with the building, which was to be an expensive one.

Now that he had enough to do, Gilbert was less envious of his old friend, whom he had not seen since his marriage; and one day meeting him in the street, Henry appeared so cordial and so thoroughly

interested in his project, that all his affection revived.

"I call it a grand idea," said Henry, warmly; "and just what I should have done in your circumstances. Build a handsome house by all means, and do the work in your best style, so that you can risk your reputation upon it. It will sell well when it's completed."

"So my wife says," returned Gilbert, delighted to find that Henry approved the scheme.

"Tell her, then, that I call her a good adviser," said Henry, hastening away.

The young builder now regretted most keenly that he had not fitted himself, as his friend had done, for every part of the business. He found it absolutely necessary to employ a journeyman who was capable of keeping accounts, and therefore was obliged to pay him high wages. He had not fully decided upon his plan, when, one evening, he called upon Henry, having resolved to ask his advice.

The young architect went to his portfolio, and searching among his papers, at length found a

drawing of a handsome house, with first and second floors, and also a framing-plan.

"You are welcome to the use of these," said he; "and if there is anything else in which I can aid you, let me know."

Gilbert was much moved. He was naturally of an amiable, generous disposition, and this kindness roused all his noble feelings. He caught Henry's hand and pressed it warmly, exclaiming —

"May be I'll have a chance to pay back your kindness one of these days."

"Thank you," returned the other; "I know your kind heart of old. You've done me many a good turn."

The Town Hall and High-School House completed really did great credit to the taste and skill of the young architect, and reflected honor upon the town. In the dedication services many allusions were made to him; and among the toasts, at the great supper given by the town, was one which called upon him to respond. Though tall and erect in form, yet Henry's face was as fair and smooth as

that of a young girl, giving him an appearance of being younger than he really was. When he arose he was greeted with so much enthusiasm that he was quite overcome, and his grandmother, who sat by his side, trembled from excitement.

For a moment his voice was so low that scarcely a word was audible; but presently there rose upon the ear of the large audience an articulation full, clear, and musical, uttering the most chaste and refined sentiments, in a diction not only pure but elegant. The silent and wrapt attention of the assembly proved their interest in the young speaker; but when, with a graceful bow, he closed by thanking them for the kind encouragement they had given him, assuring them it would be an additional motive to stimulate him to further exertion, that he might render himself worthy of such high praise, it seemed as if the new edifice must fall to the ground from the long-continued and repeated shouts of applause.

Neither was Mr. Morse forgotten; but his glory was reflected through his young partner — a vote of

thanks being passed him for the thorough training of so skilful a workman.

On this occasion, Mrs. Stearns for the first time felt a pang of regret that her husband had declined the overtures of Mr. Morse, for then he would have come in for his share of the praise; and she, as his wife, would have received marked attention. It was galling in the extreme to her to see how eagerly persons of the highest rank in town pressed around old lady Hooper, to congratulate her on the complete success of her grandson, or with how much respect they gave way as he tenderly led her through the crowd to the carriage waiting at the door.

Now Henry was at the height of popularity, and it would be strange indeed if he had not been tempted to be lifted up, or to say: "It is by the labor of my own hands that I have done this." It was well for him that he felt his own weakness, and that he knew where to go for strength to resist temptation. In the solitude of his own room, on that auspicious night, he prayed for the grace of humility, — remembering that for all these talents

which had brought him into notice, he was indebted to his Father in heaven. He implored guidance and direction as to every action of his future life, feeling that it was sweet to be assured that a Father's finger held his hand, and would lead him safely on through his earthly pilgrimage, to rest at last in his heavenly home.

But we must hasten over two years, at the end of which time we find Mr. Stearns living in his own house, though not the one he was building when we last referred to him. Taking advantage of a favorable opportunity, he had sold that to great advantage, and had immediately commenced the erection of another, which he now occupied. They had an infant a year old, whom they called Alonzo; his mother having seen this name in a novel, and considered it very romantic. Mr. Stearns's father and both his grand-parents were dead. At the time of their decease Mr. Turner held a mortgage upon the farm, so large that it nearly covered its value. The right of redemption was, therefore, sold at public

auction, and bid in by the rumseller for two hundred dollars.

With this pittance the homeless widow was left to the cold charities of a busy world. She expected, indeed, that Gilbert, her youngest and favorite child, would have offered her a home under his roof; and he would gladly have done so; but this his wife positively forbade. She would not have her nicely-furnished chamber occupied by one to whom she owed no favors — not she.

So true it is that often our misdeeds are visited upon us in kind, during our own life. Mrs. Stearns wept bitterly as she reflected upon the ingratitude of her son, sharply reproaching him for being influenced by his wife against his mother; but presently she felt the gnawings of conscience at the course she had long and perseveringly pursued toward the parents of her husband. They were entitled to a maintenance while they lived; but she, by her unfeeling taunts and angry words, had rendered their lives so wretched, especially after trouble

came to her own heart, that they were glad to take refuge in the grave.

Mr. Stearns had not lived three years with his wife, without finding that those who marry in haste often have an opportunity to repent at leisure. Indeed, he had not kept house one month before he ascertained that his wife's chief aim and business in life was to make a show; and that all his comfort, together with a great part of her own, must be sacrificed to this object.

This was far too much like his early home; and he resisted for a long time, but gave up at length, concluding that it was better to eat, drink, and live in the kitchen, rather than to be at constant strife. But there was one point on which he would not yield so readily; and this was the subject of diet. At home, though the food was placed without order upon the table, yet there was an abundance of it, well and even richly cooked. But now the meagreness of his fare was such that he often arose from his meals with the cravings of appetite unsatisfied and his temper soured. He remonstrated with his

wife again and again, reminding her that he worked hard and needed to live well, and that his wages were such that he could afford to do so.

But Mrs. Stearns had a mind of her own, as we have already seen.

"Did you suppose," she would often ask, "that I married you to spend all my days in drudging like a slave? If you did you were greatly mistaken. I don't interfere with your business; and I'll thank you not to interfere with mine.

But if company chanced to call, — they were seldom invited, — the case was altered. Mr. Stearns hardly felt himself at home, his table was so loaded with hot rolls, cakes, and rich sweetmeats. To make up for this extravagance, however, he was compelled for some days to put up with whatever he could get.

Mr. Stearns was naturally fond of making a gay appearance; and one of the first things that attracted him toward his wife, was her rich and showy dress. He thought how pleasant it would be to go home from his work and see her tastefully clad; but this

was a subject on which marriage undeceived him. Mrs. Stearns dressed for a party, and Mrs. Stearns about her own house, were two different persons; and few would have recognized one in the other. She often came to the table with disordered hair, slip-shod shoes, and a dress so torn and soiled that he was actually ashamed of her. When he tried to prevail upon her to pay more attention to her person, she retorted angrily —

"You ought to thank me for being economical, instead of finding fault that I don't dress gaily enough."

CHAPTER VI.

DEATH AT THE COTTAGE.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

Meanwhile Mr. Appleton, as he was now called, had been visited with severe affliction. His grandmother, who, ever since he could remember, had enjoyed a remarkable degree of health, caught a violent cold in consequence of being overtaken while at church by a storm, and was confined to her bed for several weeks. She recovered from this sickness, but continued feeble, so that Henry devoted the greater part of his evenings to the care of her, enlivening many a long hour by his cheerful conversation. The young woman, daughter of a neighbor, who had nursed her while sick, still remained in the family, and by her devoted attention relieved Henry of much solicitude when obliged to be absent from home.

One afternoon he returned unexpectedly to the cottage, to prepare for a ride of a few miles, and found Mary in the kitchen engaged in cooking for tea.

"How's grandma?" he asked, pleasantly.

"Very comfortable. She has been knitting for an hour or two."

He ran to his chamber, changed his coat, brushed his hair, and then opened the door to the parlor. There sat the old lady, apparently asleep, her head supported upon one hand, her arm resting on the chair. He stepped softly towards her, and gazed a moment into that loving, peaceful countenance, upon which a smile lingered, and then gently left the room.

"She is asleep," he whispered to Mary, "and I didn't wake her."

Mary nodded, but made no reply.

Henry went out through the shed, blacked his shoes, opened the gate and latched it carefully behind him, when suddenly he stopped.

"She will be disappointed," he said to himself;

"and as I may be detained after my usual hour to return home, I'll go back and tell her so."

The young girl was rather surprised to hear him return and open the door into the parlor, but went on with her work until startled by a loud scream from Henry for help. She ran to his aid, and saw him on his knees before his grandmother, imploring her to speak to him.

But her voice, which heretofore had always responded cheerfully to his, continued silent; her countenance, which had beamed so fondly upon him, remained fixed and immovable.

For a moment Mary stood speechless with horror, and then darted from the house across the garden to summon her mother.

"She is not dead!" cried Henry, as the neighbors gathered around her, wishing to remove her to the bed. "She cannot be dead; she has only fainted."

"Leave her to us; we will do everything to restore her," said a kind voice, pitying the anguish depicted on the countenance of the young man.

"Cannot some one be sent for the doctor?" exclaimed Henry. "I am sure she cannot be dead!" and he continued vigorously to chafe the cold, passive hands.

She was indeed not dead; but when the doctor arrived he found her recovered from her swoon and in a dying condition. She was fully conscious of her situation, and lay with her head resting on the breast of her grandson, her hand clasped in his, while he, at her request, was repeating the soul-sustaining words: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

When he ceased, her lips feebly moved, and inclining his ear, Henry could just catch the words —

"Fear God — my dear boy — and keep — all his — commandments — then he will give you peace in death — and bless you throughout all eternity."

The voice grew fainter and then ceased; but pres-

ently, with a slight pressure of his hand, she whispered —

"Remember — dear — you've always — been a comfort — to me. I'm — going — home — now."

These last words were spoken like a child going to sleep; and presently she was asleep in Jesus, resting forever in the bosom of his love.

The decease of his beloved relative, who had acted in the triple capacity of father, mother, and friend, cast a deep gloom over the mind of Henry. He was now alone in the world. He felt desolate, forsaken. He took his hasty meals in the sympathizing family of his partner, but still slept at the cottage. There in the evening he would sit and read, and pray for grace to acquiesce in this appointment of Providence; and perhaps the next minute glance at the vacant chair, and burst into a passion of tears.

His pastor visited and conversed with him; told him he was doing wrong to cherish his grief and brood over his sorrow so as to impair his health and render him incapable of performing the duties of

life. He urged an entire change of scene; and at length after consultation with his partner, Henry determined to shut up the cottage and go a journey.

It must be confessed that it was with a sad heart he left the home of his youth, the grave of his grandmother, even for the short space of one month. In order to stimulate him to exertion and give him something to occupy his mind, Mr. Morse suggested that he should visit a large inland town, where his sister, Mrs. Bullard, resided, and which was said to contain some fine specimens of architecture. Henry remembered to have seen the son of this lady while visiting at his uncle's, and that he had been much pleased with him. He consented to take N—— in his way, and left home with letters of introduction in his pocket.

At this very time it so happened that Susy Lee, a young orphan, was visiting at the house of Mr. Bullard, who was her uncle. When Henry retired to rest on the night of his arrival, after having passed an evening in her society, he acknowledged to himself that he had never met so lovely a character.

He determined to watch her closely, to cultivate her acquaintance as much as was in his power during his short stay in N——, and then — why if she was what she seemed, he already felt it would be no difficult task to love her.

Mr. and Mrs. Bullard became exceedingly interested in their sorrowing guest. They tried to cheer him; and Susy, too, looked at him so mournfully out of her clear blue eyes, as if she would say: "I can pity you, for I, too, am an orphan," that he began to think there might after all be something left to live for. His kind host urged him to prolong his stay. Now that their son was away, they were so lonely it seemed pleasant to hear his voice about the house. Susy blushed, but said nothing.

And so it was that one day after another flew by, until his time to be absent had nearly expired, and his journey was still only in anticipation. He wrote his partner in a more cheerful strain, and postponed his return another week; for he had ascertained that at the close of that time, Susy was going to B——, a town about twenty miles from his own home, and

he had acquired a right to accompany her there. She had just completed her education at an academy, and had already engaged herself as teacher of a private school. He left her comfortably situated in the house of a friend, and returned to the cottage, like Isaac, comforted after his mother's death.

He had now an additional motive for exertion: his beloved Susy must be provided with a home. The house in which he had always lived with his grandmother, she had bequeathed to him. This was all she had to give him, as her pension was only during her own life. The young man was fortunate enough to obtain a small family, consisting of a man, his wife, and one child, to move into the cottage, and take him to board. To accomplish this, he made some trifling repairs, and run a light verandah across the front and one side to give it a more modern appearance; but this he was happy to do in order still to have his home under the roof which had sheltered his infancy.

A few months later, a fine lot of land, situated on the main street, was thrown into the market in con-

sequence of the death of the owner. It presented a fine slope down to the road, and was capable of being cut up for several house-lots. To the astonishment of many, Mr. Appleton became the purchaser, paying down two thirds of the price and giving a mortgage for the remainder.

"That was rather an expensive purchase of yours, Henry," said Mr. Morse, one day, as they were passing.

"It was, indeed," was the reply; "and under other circumstances, I should consider it an unsafe one; but this is, in my opinion, the finest site in town. I have had my eye upon it for a long time."

"I consider it a safe speculation," added the gentleman. "Land must rise in this part of the town; and you can build — let me see," — measuring it with his eye, — "I should say five houses upon it."

"Yes, I suppose so," replied the other; "but I intend to build only one."

"It ought to be a very handsome one, then, on such an elevation, commanding a view of the whole town and the river in front."

"I hope it may be an ornament to the town."

"Still I rather think you mistake. You could make it much more profitable to build several houses not as expensive. They would sell better."

Henry smiled, but shook his head.

"Have you decided upon the plan?"

"Oh, I don't intend to build for a year or two, till I have paid for the place, and then, probably, in pretty much the style of grandmother's."

The senior partner looked aghast.

"In the meantime," continued Henry, much amused, "I shall cultivate the land, and set out trees — perhaps lay out walks, if I am able. I mean to improve all my leisure time in gardening."

"O ho!" exclaimed Mr. Morse, archly, "I begin to understand. Well, I acknowledge, if one may judge by your account, this place is none too good for your espoused."

Susy Lee had been teaching school a year, — long enough to endear herself to each one of her scholars, and to win the cordial respect of their parents,

— when Henry began to think it quite time to make some arrangements for bringing her to his home. True, she was only just eighteen, and he but five years her senior; but, he argued, if he was able to support a wife, he was not too young to marry.

The proposition was made earlier than Susy had expected, and at first she hesitated. She had partly promised to teach another year; but Henry soon convinced her that, as her first promise was to him, the other was by no means binding.

He gave the family with whom he boarded notice, therefore, that he should want the cottage, and began forthwith to prepare it for his bride. We have already described the furniture of the parlor, and with the addition of a new carpet, and a pretty paper with rosebuds peeping out from clusters of leaves, it remained unaltered. The bed-room had already been enlarged to suit the last occupant, and now, with its neat chamber-set, — a present to Susy from her uncle Bullard, — its small-figured carpet, and ample wardrobe made by Henry's own hands, it looked very comfortable, even for a bride.

Then Susy had other friends, who dearly loved the orphan girl, and remembered her in this hour of her nuptials; while from the patrons of her school she received a handsome cake-basket and a dozen silver teaspoons.

It was now autumn, and Henry proposed that the wedding trip should be postponed until another summer. Susy gladly consented; and the very hour after their marriage saw them in the cars on their way home to the cottage. Never did the evening sun shine on a more contented, happy, grateful pair. The whole future was tinged with rose-color, while hope stood radiant before them, beckoning them on to increased usefulness and bliss.

As Susy was married at her uncle's, a distance of about fifty miles, no one of Henry's friends, aside from the family of Mr. Morse, were invited to the wedding. But as it was not at all his policy to prevent his friends from the pleasure they might enjoy in his wife's society, as soon as Susy was a little wonted to her new home a small party was invited to partake of the hospitalities of the bride.

She was dressed simply in white, with no other ornament than a white camellia in the rich braids of her dark chestnut hair. Before the hour for the company to arrive, she tripped into the room where her young husband was waiting to receive her, and stood before him with clasped hands, gazing archly into his face as she inquired —

"Are you satisfied with the appearance of your wife, Mr. Appleton?"

"O, Susy," he cried, taking both her hands in his, his eyes beaming with affection, "I've been thinking how I wish grandma had seen you; she would have loved you so dearly."

"I have a feeling that she does see me; that she is the angel commissioned by our Father to watch over us both," was her low response.

Henry raised the small hand he held to his lips, and turned away to hide a tear.

The countenance, the dress, and the manners of the bride were variously commented upon by the company.

"She is not exactly handsome," said one, "but

there is something exquisitely charming about her."

"And so youthful, too," added another. "She cannot be above sixteen."

"She has the best and most enduring style of beauty," remarked an old gentleman; "beauty of the soul, which beams through every feature."

"How frank she is," cried another. "She seems to speak exactly what she means. I told her what a favorite her husband was, and what credit he had done himself by his plans of some of our public buildings; she answered: 'I am delighted to feel that it must be so. And he is so good, too.'"

Gilbert Stearns needed but one glance into those truth-loving, truth-telling eyes, to feel assured that his friend had chosen wisely.

That there was pure, unalloyed affection, based upon respect existing between them, no one could doubt. Though attentive to the wants of his guests, yet his eyes constantly sought hers, his voice had a deeper melody when addressing her, while she listened to him with so much affectionate pride.

There was one guest, however, who expressed sentiments differing from the others, whatever may have been her real feelings.

"I do wonder," exclaimed Mrs. Stearns, as she was returning with her husband from the bridal party, "what Mr. Appleton could have seen to admire in that baby-faced girl! I suppose he thought she was so young that he could manage her as he chose."

Gilbert had set his teeth firmly together, determined that until they reached home, at least, he would not be betrayed into an angry dispute; therefore as his wife ceased speaking, evidently expecting him to reply, he only said, pleasantly —

"Well, that's a good way, isn't it?"

"Of course; I expected you'd say so," was her angry rejoinder. "Husbands would like to lord it over their wives; at least, I know one who does; and I have no doubt Henry Appleton is another."

"I acknowledge he is very firm," said Gilbert, coolly.

"Well, I hope he'll find her all he anticipated,"

said the lady, in a voice which meant, "I hope he will be entirely disappointed in her."

"I have no doubt of it," returned the other, warmly.

"How old-fashioned their rooms are furnished," urged Mrs. Stearns, by no means ready to give up the attack.

No reply.

"I should think he would be ashamed to invite such a company to his house until he could afford something better. Why, I don't believe he could sell all that old trumpery for ten dollars!"

"There you are mistaken, madam," said Gilbert, with an air of triumph. "Henry has refused two hundred dollars for that old-fashioned clock. There is hardly another like it in the country. But I don't believe he'd sell it for a thousand. Then the secretary and carved table would bring almost as much more, as rare specimens of the antique."

For a moment the wife was silent from pure astonishment; but at length as they reached home exclaimed, with great emphasis, —

"Well, I don't believe she will be noticed much in society; why she don't look as if she knew enough to care whether she lived in a cottage or in the handsomest house in town. And only think of having a wedding party without w'ne. I always thought Henry Appleton had a streak of meanness about him."

"Take care!" cried her husband, now fully roused. "I won't hear Henry abused."

"You must shut your ears then; for I shall say what I please. His conduct is all of a piece. Taking his wife into that little old cottage, having such dingy-looking furniture, and then set out to have a stylish party, and give them nothing but cake and lemonade! I declare it looks too stingy."

Since his father's death, Gilbert realized more than he had ever done the kindness of his young friend in urging him to give up drinking, and had become a sturdy supporter of the cause of temperance. It was entirely contrary to his wishes that wine had been circulated at his own wedding, and even then he had given offence to his bride,

because he would not even raise the glass to his lips. He knew that Henry acted in this manner from principle, and was now all ready to retort bitterly, when fortunately, at this moment, a childish voice calling "papa!" put an end to the unhappy controversy.

From this time, however, Mrs. Stearns considered herself as pledged against the new-comer, and her husband was equally determined to speak in her favor, so that the sayings and doings of Mrs. Henry Appleton became a fruitful source of dissension between them.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NEW HOUSE.

"A good man .... will guide his affairs with discretion."

Again we must pass over a lapse of eighteen months, at which time we find our young friend Susy Appleton sitting at her work, with her foot upon the rocker of a handsome cradle, manufactured of black walnut by her husband.

At this moment Mr. Appleton entered with a stranger.

The young mother looked up with a smile, and an almost imperceptible glance of anxiety lest the noise should wake the sleeping babe.

Henry lowered his voice instantly, as he added —

"What do you say to selling the cottage, my dear?"

"Oh, I should be so sorry! I love the place so well."

"Is it convenient to do work in?" asked the practical gentleman. "Women always inquire about that."

"It has every convenience," urged the young housekeeper, "such a nice kitchen, with hard and soft water, and such large closets." She sighed as she added, "I'm afraid I shall never like another as well."

"Why, I had no idea you were so attached to the old place," returned Mr. Appleton, glancing affectionately at her. "I'm sorry for your sake that I have offered it to this gentleman; but I promise you that if he don't take it, I wont part with it without first asking your consent."

But this very reluctance on her part, which the stranger saw was real, decided him to make the purchase, and to make it at once, lest the owner should draw back. So when he left the cottage, Henry playfully said —

"What will you and the baby do now, Susy, without any home?"

When she was once more alone — I do not like to

tell it, but I suppose truth demands the sacrifice — she held up her work, but her eyes were dim; and yielding to the sudden gush of feeling laid it down again, while the tears dropped thick and fast into her lap.

Could Mrs. Stearns have seen her and been convinced that she was weeping from sorrow at leaving so humble a home, she would have considered her a greater dunce than ever.

Having sold his old home, Mr. Appleton made it his first business to build himself a new one. Stones for his cellar, and hewn granite for the underpinning were already upon the spot; and after parting with the stranger, the architect did not return home until he had engaged men to go to work upon them at once.

When it was rumored that Mr. Appleton had sold the cottage in which he lived, was to give up possession in three months, and intended in that time to put up a house for himself on his beautiful site, the public were quite curious to see the new building. All agreed that the situation demanded a lofty

mansion: that it would be such in order to correspond with the laying out of the walks, and the rows of beautiful trees, both fruit and ornamental, was equally granted. But some doubted whether, even with his unusual success in business, it would be wise in him to spend so much of his capital in a residence for himself. When questioned concerning the style of house he intended to erect, Henry only smiled, as he playfully remarked —

"The frame will be up in a week or two, and you can judge a little how it will look."

The lumber for his new building had been selected and seasoned for a year, so that now he could drive it on with great speed. At the expiration of a week, the cellar, thirty-six feet by eighteen, was dug and stoned, and the underpinning set. The next week the frame, which was carefully planed at the shop, was up and covered. Standing, as it did, the end to the street, in the centre of so fine a building spot, approached by two wide, gravelled walks, winding to the front entrance, it must be confessed it did not present a very magnificent appearance. As the

builder went here and there, directing his men, watching every board and slate that was put upon the roof, he could see groups of persons standing in the street earnestly discussing the new edifice.

Some even ventured to remonstrate, urging that with his acknowledged skill as an architect, it was a duty he owed the town to put up a handsome mansion. Gilbert, too, reminded his friend of his advice to himself: "Build a fine house, and build it well, so that you will be willing to risk your reputation upon it."

"That is just what I am doing," was Henry's smiling reply; "and I think you will say when it is completed, that it will compare favorably with any mansion in town, both as to elegance and durability."

With this answer all were obliged to be satisfied, though they wondered not the less.

"I verily believe," exclaimed Mrs. Stearns, "that when the house is done, Susy is just fool enough to move into it and be perfectly content."

"So do I," responded her husband.

"How ridiculous for her to drag that great baby about so! I met her to-day, and she looked like a servant. I suppose she was going up to the new house, for she had on nothing but a morning dress and a plain linen collar. How anybody can call her handsome, I can't conceive."

"I met her too," rejoined the gentleman, "and a prettier sight I never wish to see. And I had good company in my opinion; for Mrs. Lang, that rich lady you think so much of, with her sister from the city, met Mrs. Appleton just as she came out of the gate; and they stopped her and talked a long time, and played to the baby. And Mrs. Lang even offered to go back with her and draw the baby, she thought Susy looked so delicate. Susy only laughed, and declared she was quite well. She said she had drawn the wagon from choice, as Martha was busy in the kitchen, that the carriage was not heavy at all, and she gave the lady the handle to try it. 'I knew,' she said, 'this beautiful air would do baby so much good, and it makes me feel quite strong.' The city lady then said something about the new

house, and what an elegant place they would have; and Susy's voice grew quite sad as she told them she wanted her husband to build it exactly like the cottage — she had been so happy there and loved the old place so dearly."

"Little goose!" interrupted Mrs. Stearns, sharply. "Didn't I tell you so? Well, what else did they say?"

"Not much; only when they asked her if the frame was all up, she said she believed so, that her husband told her it would be pretty when it was done; and she looked so smiling as she said, 'you know he has such good taste.' Then she bid them good-bye and went away; but they praised her up to the skies, and as they passed on, Mrs. Lang said, 'How sweetly she looked, so fresh and neat. She is a dear little creature; I can never see enough of her.'"

"And where were you, Mr. Stearns, I should like to know, to hear all that?" asked his wife sharply.

He had told all this with an air of triumph, knowing that he was exciting her envy, and now he

turned toward her with a smile, as he answered — "Standing in front of the new house, with my arms on the faced wall."

"Looking like a ninny, I suppose, and disgracing your family."

"Certainly; and Squire Manning looked like another; for he was by my side, and in the same attitude."

"And did he hear all this?"

"Of course; for he never took his eyes off the ladies till they parted."

"What does he say to the new house?"

"He says, 'Henry Appleton knows what he's about.'"

The very day before the expiration of the three months, Mr. Appleton removed the furniture from the cottage to his new house on the hill, and to this we must introduce the reader.

The house stood, as already mentioned, with the end to the street, the front part, with the addition of a large bay-window, being occupied as the parlor,

or as Henry called it, the living-room. The outer door entered on the side, into a hall eight feet wide, from which inner doors led into the parlor on the right, and the kitchen on the left. Stairs to the second story, which was low, were also entered from this hall. The space behind the stairs was filled by two large closets, one for the parlor and one for the kitchen. The entrance to the cellar was from the kitchen and directly under the other stairs. Over these rooms were two large chambers, with convenient closets, and a very fine bathing-room with silver faucets and a marble bowl.

Into the spacious sitting-room, therefore, with the clock and its faithful companions greeting them like old friends, Susy was installed on that pleasant afternoon; and giving the baby the liberty of its feet, set her upon the floor, while she went about the room, moving a chair here and a table there, re-arranging the books in the secretary, and giving those last touches a mistress only can appreciate, but which add so much to the ease and taste of a room. She had scarcely completed the last arrangement when

her husband opened the door and admitted Mrs. Lang and her daughter.

"This lady," he said, "is anxious lest you should consider her visit ill-timed. I have assured her that if that is the case you will tell her so frankly."

Susy came forward eagerly, saying, as she held the lady's hand —

"I was just longing for some one to tell me whether I have arranged the furniture to the best advantage. I shall be very glad if you will stay, for I feel quite lost in these high, spacious rooms, so different from our pleasant little home."

"You have a most delightful view," exclaimed the lady, approaching the bay-window. "Why, I had no idea the prospect would be so extensive. How beautifully the river winds along."

"I fear I shall be so tempted to gaze that my sewing will suffer," said Susy, with a merry laugh.

In the meantime Marion, Mrs. Lang's daughter, had been cultivating the acquaintance of little Miss Appleton, and had so far succeeded that they were now having a fine game of bo-peep. The lady pro-

posed that they should improve the opportunity to arrange the rest of the house, and so by the time Henry returned with the men who were moving wood and coal into the cellar, everything was in its appropriate place.

The year following these events was one of great pecuniary pressure, and Mr. Appleton congratulated himself that he had not been persuaded to go beyond his means in the erection of his new dwelling. He had now paid for his land, which was every day increasing in value, and with what he had obtained for the cottage had more than paid for the house without interfering with the capital lodged in his business.

Often as he was returning to his sweet home, wearied with the cares and labors of the day, and looked forward to the smile of welcome he was so sure to receive from his beloved Susy, and the shout of delight with which his arrival would be hailed by his little Lizzie, his cup of happiness seemed full to overflowing.

Before they retired to rest under their new roof,

the happy Christian pair knelt down together, while Henry thanked their Heavenly Father for this new and comfortable abode. He prayed that in it they might be more than ever consecrated to the service of God; that no word of dissension or strife should come up to mar their happiness; but that it might ever be the home of peace, charity, and love. He prayed, too, for their dear child, that they might have grace and strength to bring her up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and that if other children should here be born to them, they might early be dedicated to him. Nor did he forget the faithful Martha, who had cheerfully shared the cares and anxieties incident to their change of dwellings, but implored for her the blessings promised those who are faithful stewards, knowing that of the Lord she should receive the reward of the inheritance.

Sometimes he asked himself whether he could expect such happiness to be lasting, and the sincere language of his heart was, "O Lord, sanctify unto thy servant the prosperity with which thou hast graciously blessed him. Let not my heart be

haughty nor mine eyes lofty, lest thou visit me with the rod of chastisement."

Henry Appleton was human, and therefore by no means perfect, though he earnestly sought to attain perfection. He had naturally a quick, impulsive temper, which, though early restrained by grace, often led him to speak and act as, in his calmer moments, he keenly regretted.

Susan, too, was extremely sensitive, and a sharp, impatient word would make her weep for hours. But these were only occasional clouds over a bright, serene sky.

"Susy," he used sometimes to say, "you must learn to bear and forbear, for when I am unusually worn or weary, my temper is easily aroused."

And Susan would smile, as she replied —

"Henry, there is not a happier wife than yours on the face of the earth; then Lizzie is growing so fast, and learning so many pretty ways, while our sweet little Harry is the dearest baby in the world."

Months and years flew by, until Mr. Stearns had

been married seven years. He had now three sons and a daughter. Francis, the second son, was a lovely child, who, under a judicious training would have developed into a noble character. Phebe came next, bearing her mother's name, and also inheriting much of her disposition and temperament. Last of all was William, a baby in the cradle.

Mr. Stearns had not lived in close intimacy with such a wife, without having his temper soured by her constant impatience. Sometimes he was so aroused by her unprovoked taunts, by her scolding and neglect of her children, that he was tempted to leave home and never return. But the thought of separation from those little ones, over whom he yearned with a father's heart, restrained him. He determined to bear with her as long as he could.

Whenever he visited his old friend — and Henry often assured him that there was always a place by the fireside for his boyhood's companion — he went home feeling the comparison so painful that he would resolve not to visit them again.

"Oh, how I wish!" was his bitter cry, "that I had

given my children such a mother. I could bear all if she was only kind to them; but they will grow up under her influence to be a trial to all connected with them, as she is."

"People generally realize very little how much a cheerful, contented wife lights up a house," was his sage remark one evening, when sitting in Henry's pleasant parlor, and watching the young mother playing with the children before they went to bed. The baby boy, a successor of Master Harry, sat up in his night-dress on his mother's knee, while his little brother, a lad of two years, ran back and forth in front of the chair, laughing aloud in his glee, as Lizzie ever and anon would burst out from her concealment, and shout —

"Now sister, catch the baby!"

Baby laughed and crowed so loud that his mother at last was obliged to hush him, he was getting so excited.

For a time Henry tried to converse with his friend and win him from his despondence and gloom, but presently he caught the excitement from the little

urchins, and throwing Lizzie on his back and Harry on his shoulder, he danced and capered about the room until Susy laughed tears.

In the midst of the noise and confusion Gilbert arose and left the house.

"Oh, how I could have enjoyed such scenes!" he exclaimed bitterly, "if I had chosen a different wife. My heart is crushed, and my children are brought up far worse than I was, and God knows that was bad enough."

"Poor fellow!" said Henry, as Gilbert shut the outer door, "I wish he would let us cheer him."

"He often speaks of his little Francis," said Susy. "Why could'nt we ask him to bring the boy here to play with our little ones?"

"A capital plan; don't forget, Lizzie, to ask for Francis, the next time Mr. Stearns comes."

Lizzie was a lovely child, of very delicate organization, and inherited her mother's loving, sensitive heart. If her father spoke in harsher tones than usual, her lip would quiver and her voice tremble as she faltered —

"Am I your darling, papa?"

She was an exceedingly conscientious child, and with regard to every action would ask repeatedly —

"Is God willing, mamma?"

When it was a pleasant morning, her mother would sometimes say —

"See, Lizzie, how beautifully the sun shines on the water!" or, "How pleasantly the green grass looks on the lawn! Do you know who made all these things for us?"

The little girl would look up reverently, and say —

"I thank you, God."

One Sabbath morning it stormed so severely that Mrs. Appleton and Lizzie were detained from church. The child, then three years old, busied herself for a while in looking at the pictures in her books, whispering to herself as if she were reading a story, just as her mother often read to her; but at last she grew weary, and looked about for some change. Presently she saw a pencil lying on the table, and asked, earnestly —

"May I make a picture, mamma?"

"Yes, my dear," answered her mother, "if you will make a good one for Sunday. You may draw a church, and some good little boys and girls going to Sabbath-school."

Lizzie clapped her tiny hands, and cried—

"Will God like it, mamma? Will God like it?"

"Yes, dear," answered the lady, supposing she meant to ask whether God would be willing for her to draw.

"Then I'll give it to God."

Mrs. Appleton was in the habit of relating to the child the simpler stories of the Bible. The account of the creation, of the deluge, of Moses in the bulrushes, of Joseph and his brethren, were as familiar to the little girl as household words. She had often related the story of Cain and Abel, that God was pleased because Abel had offered the best he had, but was displeased with Cain because he offered not blood, but what was bruised or worthless. She was now quite amused to see with what

earnestness the child set herself about her self-imposed task, looking up occasionally, and smiling as she said —

"I'm doing it real nice, mamma, because I'm going to give it to God."

The lady did not understand to what she referred, but merely saying, "yes, dear," went on with her reading; but after a few minutes, Lizzie brought her the drawing, an imperfect one, it must be confessed. Her cheeks were very red and her eyes sparkling, as she asked —

"Is it nice, mamma?"

"Yes, dear, very nice for such a little girl."

"And will God like it?"

"I think so, my dear."

"Then I'll put it in the fire, and let the smoke go right up to God, just like good Abel did."

When her husband returned from church, Susy repeated the incident to him, saying —

"I never thought the child understood about sacrifice."

"It shows us," he replied, earnestly, "how carefully she listens, not only to our instructions, but to every word she hears us speak. We cannot be too careful what sentiments we impress upon her tender heart."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CONTRAST.

"The hope of the righteous shall be gladness; but the expectation of the wicked shall perish."

VERY different was the training in the family of Mrs. Stearns. While the children were small she liked to have them showily dressed when she took them out to ride, or when a neighbor called, but on other occasions she often left them from morning till night in a loose wrapper over their night-gown, complaining that it took half her time to dress and undress them.

Francis was a loving little fellow, whose heart was overflowing with affection. One day he climbed up on his mother's chair, and was reaching toward her, when she suddenly jumped up and he fell prostrate to the floor. Crying with pain, it was no small aggravation to his grief to have his mother scold him

severely. With quivering voice and broken sobs, he cried out —

"I was only trying to kiss you, mamma."

Another time, after she had severely whipped him, wounded and sore he sat for a long time pondering his sorrow. At length he was partly comforted, and approaching his mother, who was in the midst of her cares, asked softly —

"Will you please let me kiss you, mamma? I am trying to be a good boy."

"Go right along out of the way, you naughty child," was her angry reply. "I can't be bothered with your kisses. Go along, I say!"

No wonder the father's heart ached when he saw them thus treated day after day, and realized that all that was lovely and affectionate in their nature was being crushed out of them.

On one occasion he went to Mr. Appleton's at an earlier hour than was usual with him, and found Henry with Harry upon his knee, engaged in reading the Bible for their family devotions. Lizzie was

sitting in her low chair close at her mother's side, while the baby was sleeping in his cradle.

As Mr. Stearns, with the freedom of an acknowledged friend, entered after a low knock at the inner door, Mrs. Appleton merely smiled a welcome, as she motioned to a chair near the cheerful fire, while her husband went on with the reading.

Gilbert knew that his friend had long professed to be governed by different principles from what he himself was; he had often heard him called a consistent Christian; but somehow it never came to him with such overwhelming force as now, when he saw him gather his family together after the labors of the day were ended, and thank God for all his mercies. His heart beat strangely as he was thus for the first time in his life brought to participate, outwardly at least, in this devotional service. He glanced at Henry. There was an elevation of soul which shone through every feature; and as he read with clear, distinct modulation, "Oh give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so,

"There was an elevation of soul which shone through every feature."—p. 122.

whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy," it was evident his heart went with the inspired word.

He then turned his attention to Susy, who sat with her earnest eyes fixed upon her husband, her soul drinking in the glorious truths. To the children, also, it was evidently no unusual scene. They sat quietly until the reading was concluded, Harry amusing himself by playing with the buttons on his father's coat.

Lizzie then arose and passed the singing books, and Mr. Appleton asked —

"What shall we sing, my dear?"

Gilbert had a fine bass voice, which had often mingled with Henry's at the singing-school. He now was urged to join in the tune Ortonville, to the hymn commencing —

"Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
Upon a Saviour's brow."

After this they all kneeled for prayer, Gilbert in great confusion rising to imitate them, and then sinking back again into his seat.

His thoughts were after a moment called from himself by the earnestness and sincerity with which Henry was confessing the sins of his past life. God had created, preserved, and blessed him; given him his daily bread, clothes to wear, the sun to cheer and warm him, the rain to moisten the earth. More than all he had given him the Bible, containing the story of a Saviour's love — the pathway to their heavenly home; how had they returned all these mercies? Alas! too often had they accepted the gift with entire forgetfulness of the Giver. They had prized far too little the offer of pardon which it had cost their Saviour his life to obtain, far too little the love of the Father who had given his only Son to save the world. For all these and manifold other transgressions the suppliant sought forgiveness at the throne of grace, and then implored blessings for time to come. Especially was God's favor sought for the dear friend who had come in to unite with them in this delightful service — that he with his whole family might belong to the household of faith, and be heirs of the heavenly inheritance.

By this time Gilbert, who had been trying to suppress his feelings, sobbed aloud; and as soon as the family arose from prayer, went hastily from the room.

Mrs. Appleton put out her hand to detain Martha in the parlor, that he might have time to recover himself. After a few moments Henry followed him, and urged him to return.

"I don't feel well," said Gilbert, trying to apologize for his unusual emotions. "I'm clear run down, and can't bear anything more than a baby."

And with this explanation the tears began to flow again.

His friend was much moved, and his heart went up in a silent prayer to God that he might be able to speak the word in season to this penitent soul. He led him back to the parlor, and found that his wife had gone with the little ones to their rest, to afford them an opportunity for free conversation. In the course of this, Gilbert readily confessed that he was heartily sick of living as he did, and if he could enjoy religion as his friend seemed to, he should like it.

"But it's no use," he added, after a moment, "I know I never can hold out, if I try to be good. Phebe will never consent to my becoming religious. Why, she'd turn the house upside down, and beat the children almost to death, if she knew I thought of such a thing!"

Henry tried to urge upon him the claims of religion and the duty he owed his own soul. He pleaded with him as a father, that he might be prepared to lead his little ones in the paths of virtue and happiness; he told him that the gracious Spirit was now striving with him, and that if he hardened his heart against these influences, he might never again be moved by them.

The poor man wept aloud, and at last promised that he would do what he could.

"You know," he exclaimed, "you was brought up to be pious. Your grandmother taught you to pray; but I was never on my knees in prayer in my life. My folks never did that sort of thing. Seems to me 'twould be easy enough to pray, though, for God to be your friend, when you feel that you

have no other, and need one as mightily as I do; and if, as you say, I can't do anything right unless God helps me to do it, I'll make bold to ask his assistance, if Phebe will only let me alone."

After Gilbert had gone, Mr. and Mrs. Appleton sat for a long time conversing about him, and offering up many a prayer in his behalf, until the old clock struck the hour of eleven, when they hastened to their bed.

As I may have stated before, both Mr. Stearns and Mr. Appleton had gone on steadily increasing their capital. From the demand for his services as an architect, for which he received much greater compensation than as a mere carpenter, Henry was much in advance of his friend. They both agreed that it was right for them to earn money in every honest and honorable way; but they differed exceedingly in their manner of spending it, though probably Gilbert might have been influenced to imitate his friend, had not his wife been so wholly opposed to it.

It was the intention of Mr. Appleton to live so entirely within his means as to outward show, that

he could afford himself and family all that would really contribute to their comfort and usefulness. Both he and his wife were distinguished for the simplicity of their dress, as well as for their general style of living; but they spent the money others would have used for costly ornaments or expensive furniture, in purchasing books for their children, which would have an effect to cultivate their tastes and refine their characters. Then their table was always laid with the strictest regard to neatness and order, and spread with a variety and abundance of well-cooked food, so that they could cheerfully render the rites of hospitality.

Lizzie, who both in character and person resembled her grandmother, inherited her exquisite taste for music, so that after hearing a tune sung through a few times she could imitate it with accuracy. One afternoon, she, with her mother, was visiting Mrs. Lang, when the lady played for her amusement a number of simple songs. The child was in raptures, and grew really pale from the excitement. Mrs. Lang then seated her at the piano, and was

equally delighted and surprised to see how quickly she distinguished the chords, and refrained from those sounds which grated upon her sensitive ear.

Mr. Appleton came for his wife in the evening, and the lady at once began to remark upon the musical talent of his daughter.

"It shall be cultivated," was his quiet reply, "even if I have to postpone finishing my house for another year."

Mrs. Appleton readily consented to submit to some inconveniences, though she confessed they were rather straitened for room, for the sake of procuring suitable advantages for their child. As an immediate consequence of this visit, the gentleman went the next day to the city, and engaged the services of a distinguished pianist to select him a good instrument, to which the little Miss was speedily introduced by her new teacher.

The expenses consequent upon this arrangement really required considerable sacrifice on the part of the parents. They had now three children, and needed more chambers. Then the young architect

naturally felt a strong desire to see his house correspond with the grounds which were every year becoming more beautiful. In front the smoothly-shaven lawn sloped gradually down to the street, protected by a high bank-wall of split granite. Clusters of trees were set out here and there where they would not interfere with the prospect from the house, and the avenues which wound up from side gates to the front entrance were thickly shaded with a variety of ornamental trees. Back of the house was the kitchen garden, and a small nursery of well selected fruit trees just coming into a bearing condition.

Within a year his business had required him to own a horse, and he had therefore been obliged to put up a barn, which was in a style of architecture similar to his house when the original plan was carried out.

On a few occasions he had been slightly annoyed by hearing a remark of this kind: "Mr. Appleton seems to think more of his animals than of his family. At any rate he has put up for them a far more

tasteful building." Perhaps unconsciously to himself such remarks had quickened his desire to complete his original plan for his dwelling, having so far lived in what would be the back wing or L. The lumber was already in a state of preparation, the whole cost estimated, when the sudden desire to give his little daughter every advantage of education, caused still farther delay in his long-cherished plans.

The rapid progress of Lizzie, however, and the immense delight which her music afforded her, soon repaid her parents for the sacrifice they had made for her good; but from the remarks of Mrs. Stearns we shall see that their motives were not appreciated by all their neighbors.

Mr. Stearns returned home to tea one evening, and found the parlor, so seldom occupied, brilliantly lighted on account of the unexpected arrival of a friend. As they sat together at the richly-spread board, from which, however, the children were excluded, Mrs. Stearns exclaimed —

"By the way, husband, did you know that Mr. Appleton had purchased an elegant piano for Lizzie? Mrs. Molton heard he gave three hundred and fifty dollars; but I don't credit a word of it. I don't believe even he, strange as he is in the management of his affairs, would be guilty of such extravagance."

"She fell short of the truth by fifty dollars," said Mr. Stearns, quietly. "I was passing just as they were taking it from the cars to his place, and Henry asked me to assist in carrying it into the house."

"Well, what did he say for himself?" asked the lady, biting her lips with vexation.

"Nothing, except when I remarked it was an elegant instrument, he said that he was sorry the case was so costly, but that the gentleman who selected it said the tone was uncommonly fine, and then added that it was four hundred dollars."

"How absurd for him to have a piano costing so much in that small, common-looking house! It will make their furniture look worse than ever. But I suppose they think it will make Lizzie a lady, like Mrs. Lang's daughter. It makes me really sick to

see how hard some people try to imitate the rich folks."

It rose to Gilbert's lips to say, that the day before she had blamed Henry that he dared to associate with wealthy people while he was mean enough to live in such a poor house; but he was trying to keep peace, and he therefore refrained from anything that would irritate her. Ever since he left Mr. Appleton's house on the night when he felt so distressed about his soul, he had been endeavoring to work out his own salvation by submitting to the taunts and unkindness of his wife without allowing himself to be made either passionate or sulky by them. This he considered a great triumph over himself, and began really to feel that he was living the life of a Christian. But as he did this in his own strength, without seeking the aid of God, he soon found his righteousness stripped from him like filthy rags.

One day, soon after the conversation at the tea-table, he asked his wife to dress up Francis, as he had been invited to tea at Mr. Appleton's, and he would carry him when he went to his work.

"Not with my consent," was the angry reply.

"Why not?" he asked, determined to keep cool.

"Because, if you must know it, I don't approve of their way of bringing up their children: setting them up to be ladies and gentlemen, when they are no better than other folks; and then Mrs. Appleton has grown so proud she scarcely speaks when I meet her in the street, and she hasn't called here, to my certain knowledge, since the year Francis was born. He shan't go there to be set against his mother and have his head filled with their Methodist notions; and you may tell them so, if you please!"

"I shall tell them no such thing," answered Gilbert, beginning to lose his self-control. "I agreed that the child should go, and I shall carry him; so if you don't mean to dress him, I'll take him as he is."

And he drew the trembling boy to his arms.

"Do it, if you dare!" screamed the angry woman; "but I tell you now, it will be worse for you and worse for him."

"I'll see to that," said Mr. Stearns.

Then rising with the boy in his arms, he went

with him to the chamber. When they returned the child had on his best coat and cap; and merely saying, "you see I have done without your assistance," he left his incensed wife to get rid of her anger as best she might.

"Oh, dear!" he cried, as he walked along, "she's enough to tempt the devil himself. I knew 'twas no use trying to be a Christian, and from this time I give up."

"I'm afraid to go home, for fear ma will beat me," said Francis, beginning to cry.

"Hush up, child! I'll see to that."

At the same time he was sure his action would not pass unrevenged even upon the innocent boy.

The afternoon passed far too quickly to poor little Francis, who seemed to himself to be in a new world. There was nothing but kindness shown him, and his grateful heart swelled almost to bursting. There was love enough in the mother's smile for him to have a share; and Lizzie, who was within a few months of his age, devoted herself to amusing him.

But as it grew dark and he realized that it was

nearly time to go home, he began to cry most bitterly.

"Why, Francis, what is the matter?" cried Susy, in alarm.

Lizzie, too, tried to comfort and soothe her little friend, but his sobs grew louder than ever. Mr. Appleton took him upon his knee and tried to ascertain the cause of this sudden grief, and at last the child sobbed out —

"I don't want to go home, 'cause ma will beat me awfully. I know she will, 'cause she hates pa so."

Henry pressed the little boy closer in his arms as he glanced with a look of horror at his wife.

"Pa says she shan't; but I know she will," continued the frightened child. I want to stay with you."

"Oh, mamma, do let him stay!" cried Lizzie, her eyes heavy with tears at this unusual scene.

Mrs. Appleton sighed as she shook her head, for just at that moment Mr. Stearns made his appearance. The father stood a moment as if expecting an explanation of what was passing. Mr. Appleton sat

holding his sobbing boy, while all the rest of the family was gathered around them; but as no one spoke he asked quickly —

"Has anything happened?"

"He wants to stay here," cried Lizzie. "Will you please let him?"

"I'm afraid of ma," sobbed the boy.

Gilbert sank down in a chair and covered his face with his hands, while his friends gazed at him with heartfelt sympathy; but what could they say to comfort him?

CHAPTER IX.

FAMILY SCENES.

"The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him; but the desire of the righteous shall be granted."

After a lapse of twelve years, let us glance again into the family of Mr. Stearns. It is the month of September, and a fatal fever is prevalent in the town. As we approach the house, we see that where it is shaded from the sun the windows are open to their fullest extent; but there is no sign of life perceptible. On opening the door to the kitchen, however, we see two girls, of apparently eight and ten years, occupied in washing dishes at a dirty sink. Presently an older girl runs quickly from the chamber, takes the tumbler from the table and hastens from the room saying in a low voice —

"He's awake now. Come up softly, and you can look at him."

Her eyes were red and swollen with weeping, and the children glance at each other, then joining hands steal gently up the stairs. The doors are all open, and many persons about; some in the entry whispering together, others engaged in attendance on the sick. The children walk quickly on to the spare chamber, always till now sacred from their footsteps, and softly entering they advance to the side of the bed. Here lies their brother Francis, with the angel of death close at his side, waiting only for a few more quick gasps, a few more convulsive struggles, before he conveys his victim away to the world of spirits.

The poor distressed father kneels by the bed, his face buried in the clothes, but his whole form shaking and trembling with the effort to control the sorrow which well-nigh overwhelms him. A younger boy stands gazing with a look of horror upon the dreadful scene, while Phebe, suppressing her sobs, ever and anon carries a spoonful of water to the sufferer's lips.

At this moment a tall, portly man enters from the next room. We recognize our old friend, Mr. Ap-

pleton. He quietly takes the cup from Phebe's hand, and bending over the dying youth, says in a clear, distinct voice —

"Do you know me, Francis?"

A faint smile lights for a moment the pallid countenance.

"Is the Saviour present with you? If you cannot speak, press my hand."

The stillness of death reigned, while every ear was listening for the faintest sound. But there was no articulate reply.

Mr. Appleton repeated the question, and a very slight pressure denoted assent.

"Are you willing to trust yourself with him?"

The white lips moved feebly and formed themselves in the word "yes." The next instant a bright smile illumined the whole countenance of the dying youth; his eyes became fixed and glassy; his soul was passing home to God.

"He is gone!" said Mr. Appleton, softly, "gone, I trust, to be happy forever in heaven."

The distressed father started to his feet, and

with one loud and agonized cry rushed from the room.

But where are the mother and her eldest son in this sad hour? Alas! the first lies insensible to what is passing about her, and the other is weeping by her side. The same fever which has proved fatal to one member is rapidly doing its work in her system. But in her case, delirium has been followed by insensibility. Mr. Appleton, who since the commencement of Francis' sickness has been unwearied in his attentions, has been for an hour by the side of the unconscious sufferer, endeavoring to arouse her to a sense of her dying condition, that she may, even at the eleventh hour, be persuaded to embrace Christ as her Saviour. But all in vain. The wild shrieks of agony, or loud unmeaning laughter which equally distressed her attendants at the commencement of her sickness, have been followed by an apathy deep and so profound that nothing can disturb it. She lies there supported by pillows, her hands cold and passive — her long hair, now thickly threaded with white, floating about her pillows — her

eyes sunken and closed — her lips parted — her bosom heaving with the effort for breath. She lies there undisturbed by the passionate sobs of Alonzo — by the coming and going of the physician, attendants, and friends — unmoved by the near approach of the grim messenger who has already laid his icy hand upon her; she lies there undismayed at the thought that before the going down of the sun she would be in the presence of the Judge of the quick and dead, there to account for all the deeds which she had done — for all her neglect of God or duties to her family unperformed — for the claims of conscience unfulfilled. She lies there, her heart beating fainter and fainter, until it ceases its motion forever.

' Oh, how dreadful will be her waking!

Days and weeks flew by. The solemn scenes attending the funeral and sepulchre of the deceased had passed, and still Mr. Appleton endeavored in vain to converse with his afflicted friend. It was evident that for some reason the mourner avoided

him; and all he could do was to pray that these trials, though not for the present joyous but grievous, might work out for the poor broken-hearted father an eternal weight of glory.

Since the first visit of Francis to his house so many years before, the child had passed nearly half the time in his family, and grew to be regarded almost like one of his own children.

On this occasion, Mr. Stearns more than ever before asserted his authority as head of the family, and declared that Francis should be allowed to go to his friend's house whenever he was invited. Though this was for years a fruitful source of dissension between them, yet the father persisted in it, hoping for the good of his child. Francis had never been a favorite with his mother, who was by turns indulgent and severe with her first-born; and this course on the part of his father prejudiced her against him more than ever. Years later, when two little girls were added to their number, and the lovely youth, now struggling after holiness, tried to lead them to love their Saviour, she scoffed

and sneered at his religion, though in her inmost heart she could but acknowledge the beauty of his character.

For a time this double affliction seemed to have a softening and subduing influence upon Alonzo, the eldest son. He had for years been a source of anxiety and grief to his father. He was rude in speech, wild and wayward in conduct. In spite of his father's remonstrances and even commands, he loved to frequent Turner's store, though the old man was now dead, and the place carried on by strangers. It was all in vain that his father repeated to him the sad story of his grandfather's death; and even of his own early experience. The boy urged, and urged with truth, that he had no home where he could entertain a friend, that he could not enter the house without bringing upon himself a storm of reproaches; therefore he must find company and pleasure as best he could.

Phebe had long been apprenticed to a milliner, and had left home immediately after the funeral of her mother, having only consented to leave her

situation in the city to attend her favorite brother in his sickness. Her father urged her to give up her trade and remain with him, as he needed a housekeeper; but she was so thoroughly weaned from home by the constant dissension and strife between her parents, and so disgusted with their mode of life as contrasted with her own in the city, that, greatly to his displeasure, she refused.

William, the next child, was not as intelligent as most children, in consequence of a severe fall upon his head when a boy of three years. He was, however, passionate in the extreme, and as his mother was the only one of whom he stood in fear, he now became a source of great trial to his father, and of terror to his younger sisters.

Of the little girls, Mary and Annette, Mrs. Stearns had often said, they were clear Stearns, and had not a particle of her spirit; and this was almost the only comfort the poor father had left him. The loss of his son was an affliction to which he could not be reconciled. Of his wife he never willingly

spoke; though once, in conversation with Mr. Appleton, he said, with some bitterness —

"She has gone to her award. If she had died years ago, I might have forgiven her for rendering my life so wretched, because my children might have been saved from her influence. Now I feel it is too late; and I, a premature old man, am left with a large family, but not one of them willing to raise a finger for their father's comfort."

"Oh," replied his friend and adviser, "I cannot but hope the future has a bright sky, even for you. If Phebe is unwilling to return, procure a suitable person as housekeeper — one whom your little girls will love, and who will make home agreeable. If you will excuse free advice, open the blinds to your parlors and let the warm sun shine into them. Show your children that you love them; and they will warmly reciprocate your affection."

"But who will take such a charge?" cried Mr. Stearns, his countenance already brightening at this pleasing picture. "You know my poor William —"

"Where is he now?" asked Mr. Appleton, interrupting him.

"With his mother's brother. It was not safe to leave him with his sisters for a day. I trust they will keep him for a time, as they are poor and glad of the money it brings them."

"Is their treatment judicious?"

"I suppose they are rather severe; and I don't know but it is necessary. At any rate, it's the treatment he has always been used to at home," added the father, in a dry, hard tone.

"I doubt whether a firm but mild discipline would not be better; but you can think of that hereafter. Your first duty is to have a pleasant, happy home for yourself and your children. Consult with Alonzo — let him see you wish his happiness equally with your own. In the meantime I will speak to my wife; perhaps she may know of some person suited to the place."

Leaving Mr. Stearns, let us accompany Mr. Appleton to his family, lest after the lapse of so many

years we should feel like strangers. After walking on for near a quarter of a mile, we at length turn into an avenue shaded with oak, elm, maple, and linden trees, interspersed with smaller varieties of evergreens and mountain-ash. Proceeding slowly up the ascent, we come in view of a noble mansion. The house, which is forty-four feet front, stands facing the river, having been placed directly in front of the former building, which now is occupied as an L ; the large bay-window being removed to one end of the main part. Over the front entrance is a handsome portico with fluted columns, of the Corinthian style of architecture. Ringing the bell, we are admitted to a hall opening on the right and left into spacious rooms. One of these, on the south side, is fitted up as a library and music-room, the deep bay-window being at this moment occupied by a young girl, so deeply absorbed in reading that she does not notice our entrance. Her name is Agnes ; and from the casual glance we catch of her bright face, we have no doubt a further acquaintance would be productive of much pleasure.

We turn, at the entrance of a tall, graceful girl, whom we presently recognize as our old friend Lizzie. Though time has much improved her, yet we are glad to see that she still retains the calm serenity of countenance which so delighted us in her infancy. No one could look into those earnest, truthful eyes, or witness that sweet smile, without being sure that her soul was peaceful and happy. We then accompany her to the parlor, where her mother sits with her work.

Time has passed over her with a gentle wing. Though her form is fuller, yet her complexion is as fair, and her smile as frank and loving as ever; while her chestnut hair shows not one thread of silver. She has not forgotten the duties of hospitality; and we are no sooner seated in her pleasant parlor, through whose long windows the western sun is shining so gorgeously, than we feel at home. We converse of the past; and forgetting the flight of time inquire for Harry, the curly-headed boy. Just at this moment a youth of fifteen summers springs lightly from the gravelled walk upon the side bal-

cony, and thence through the French window into the room. His cheek becomes somewhat more rosy as he perceives one whom he considers a stranger; but reassured by his mother's warm smile, he advances, with a bow, to answer to his name.

"Can this be Harry?" we ask. "Why, this is the boy who used to ride on his father's shoulder!"

"And this is another," said Lizzie, as, with a merry laugh, she pulled forward her brother Frank. "They are a pair of pleasure-loving urchins as one would wish to see."

There was a world of affection in her voice as she said this, and gazed on them with a fond sister's pride.

"O Lizzie, will you help me paste my kite? I did not miss in one lesson this afternoon," exclaimed the younger boy, catching her round her waist.

"Yes, dear. When you are ready call me."

"Where is Agnes?" inquired Harry.

"In the library, reading, as usual," answered his mother.

"Frank drew this in school," said the youth, "and I want to show it to her."

"Let me see it," said Lizzie.

Taking it from his hand she brought it to the sofa. It was a sketch of his home, with waving trees and sloping lawn, boys and girls running here and there — very life-like and true to nature, except that instead of the distant view of the river, there was a lake at the foot of the lawn, and small boats tied there floating upon the water. The boy had evidently his father's taste for drawing, and with proper training would make no mean artist.

"Give it to me," said Lizzie; "I should so like a sketch of home."

"Frank will draw you another," answered Harry, holding out his hand; "I promised Agnes the first picture I could get him to do."

"I hope he does not neglect his studies to draw," said his mother, gravely.

"No, indeed, mamma! He can learn his lessons so quickly there is no fear of his missing in them. If he is engaged on a piece he wants to finish, he just works on it till a few minutes before the class are called to recite, and then goes into his lessons

with all his might; and when the bell rings, walks up as gravely as if he had thought of nothing else all the session, and back again with ten good marks affixed to his name."

In a moment a scream of delight came from the ardent Agnes. She ran into the parlor with her finger between the leaves of her book, and the drawing in her hand, exclaiming —

"Look, mamma! look, Lizzie! Frank drew this, and Harry has given it to me. O, papa!" she added, as he at this moment entered from the garden, "will you please let that man at the shop who does such nice work make a frame for this pretty picture? I want to hang it in my room."

Mr. Appleton examined the picture with pleased surprise. Even his critical eye could detect no fault in the proportion of the buildings, or the laying out of the grounds.

"Where is Frank?" he inquired.

"Out in the work-room, making a kite," answered Lizzie.

"Run, Agnes, and tell him to come to me."

The boy presently appeared, his sister talking most earnestly to him as he entered the room.

"Well, Frank," said his father, "I have been examining your sketch. It is very good. Where did you stand when you took it?"

"I was in my seat at school, sir."

"Does the master allow you to draw in study hours?"

"Yes, sir, if I do not neglect my lessons."

"And you are sure that is not the case?"

"I'll show you my report for last week, sir, if I haven't lost it. I had it in my pocket a day or two ago."

The lad fumbled among loose pieces of string, bits of paper, slate and lead-pencils, until at last he drew out a soiled, rumpled card, which he presented to his father as his report.

"This speaks well for you," resumed the gentleman; but I confess I should have liked to have seen it in its pure and original state. I thank you to give it to your mother or to me at once next time. But about the drawing — you did it from memory, then?"

"Oh, yes, sir. I never can forget how my dear home looks, if I live a hundred years. I know where every tree and bush stands; but I didn't want the picture to look crowded, so I didn't put them all down. That's Agnes, and that's me," he added, pointing to the children on the lawn.

"I hope that is not intended as a likeness of me," rejoined Lizzie, archly, pressing up close to her father so that she could look over the drawing with him; and she placed her taper finger on the chubby form of a young girl driving a hoop.

"Oh, no, indeed!" cried Frank, with a perfect shout of merriment; "but stand still a minute, and I'll put you in."

He drew his pencil from his pocket, and sitting at the table glanced two or three times from her to the paper, wet the lead to give a deeper shade, and then handed his father the drawing again.

Mr. Appleton gave a start of surprise as he saw quite a correct sketch of Lizzie and himself as they then stood, one arm of his thrown lightly around his daughter's neck.

"O, Frank! you're a darling!" cried Agnes, kissing him again and again. "Can't he draw splendidly, papa?"

"Yes, dear. It shall be my first business," he added, addressing his wife, "to provide a good master for him."

"And I may have a frame, father, mayn't I?"

"Yes, if Harry will make you one. Tell him to go to the shop to-morrow morning, and I'll give him a pretty piece of rosewood. He may make it at home, with his new tools.

By this time the family were called to tea, after which they gathered round the family altar. Mr. Appleton read a portion of Scripture; then all united in a hymn of praise, Lizzie accompanying them with the piano, when the father offered an earnest prayer for protection and support through the coming night.

This was the secret of the happiness of this lovely family. Religion sweetened and purified all their joys. Many looked upon them with wonder and delight, as one after another of their children grew

up dutiful, obedient, and loving, bidding fair to be an honor to their parents and ornaments to society.

"Your children are all remarkable for their talents," said one gentleman to Mr. Appleton.

"I am not aware of it," was the quiet reply. "As far as I have observed, they are pretty much like other children in the beginning; but I confess my wife has a wonderful tact at governing them."

"And I suppose she would say her husband has," was the smiling reply. "But that does not account for their peculiar gifts. For instance, your eldest daughter plays like a professor of music, and Frank has discovered a remarkable taste for drawing."

"No more, I think," said Mr. Appleton, "than Harry for his skill in using tools. Agnes, who is only eleven, is not sufficiently developed for us to decide what particular faculty we ought to cultivate; or, rather, she is, as her sister affectionately boasts, so universal a genius that she will outshine all the rest. But watch your own children, and you will find some one thing which particularly interests them, and in which, if they have the proper culti-

vation, they will excel. Excuse me if I speak with too much freedom ; but take your eldest son, who was exceedingly fond of study, and who wished to go to college. You, on the contrary, had made up your mind to take him into your store, where he was very averse to going, and, as was to be expected, he is not doing as well in that branch of business as if he had been left to follow the bent of his own inclinations. Then take William —"

Here Mr. Appleton suddenly stopped, as he perceived the gentleman sitting grave and silent.

"I see ; I see it all !" exclaimed the other, starting from his seat. "Charles is seventeen ; but that is not too late to change. He has sold his last dollar's worth in my store. He shall go on with his Latin and Greek, which he so doats on, and enter college in the fall. Then Bill, the little rogue, who is always hanging round the store, while I try to keep him at his lessons, he shall have weighing and selling to his heart's content. Hurrah ! I feel as if a hundred pounds' weight were lifted off my shoulders" ; and the excited father laughed loud and long.

"On the strength of this resolution, I invite you and yours, every one of them, to a dinner four years from next Commencement, given in honor of my son's oration. Ha! ha! ha! Wont the boys have a merry romp on the green, when I inform them of the change in their prospects! Charley shall don the Freshman's cap, and Bill the merchant's sack. So goes the world!"

CHAPTER X.

THE DRUNKEN SON.

"Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup. . . At the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder."

After his conversation with his early friend, Mr. Stearns made it his first business to procure a woman to act as housekeeper and as mother to his young children. A gentleman of whom he made inquiries, having recommended a widow lady in an adjoining town, he hired a carriage, and taking Mary and Annette with him, rode over to see her.

The appearance of this lady pleased him. She had had children of her own; had one little girl living at home with her, of whom she seemed very fond. Before he left she had consented to the arrangement, provided William remained away, and agreed to be ready to accompany him home the following week.

"I think I have found just the right person," said the delighted man to Mr. Appleton, the next time they met. "She is neat and tidy, and always has a cheerful face when I go home from my work. Then the little girls are up and dressed for school before breakfast, which has never happened in their lives before to my knowledge. I begin to think you were right; and I may look forward to some happiness yet. I am only in my prime. You see a heart at rest makes me feel younger already."

"I rejoice sincerely in your good fortune," said his friend, cordially grasping him by the hand. "What is the lady's name?"

"Washburn — Mehitable Washburn. Her husband has been dead three years, and he left her poor; so she was glad to come."

"And is Alonzo as pleased with her as you and the little girls are?"

The father's countenance grew dark.

"No," he answered, in a harsh tone. "He treated her disrespectfully, rudely. He told her he was not willing his mother's place should be so soon occu-

pied by a stranger. She repeated his insulting remark to me, and asked whether I should allow such conduct in my house; hinting that if she had been aware to what treatment she should be exposed, she would not have left her home, which, if it was a poor one, was better than mine with continual strife. I know by my own bitter experience that there can be no happiness without peace. I told her that I feared the poor fellow had been drinking; but when he was sober he would be willing to apologize. I then talked with the boy, but he was terribly set in his way. I never knew he had so much of his mother's temper in him. At last he declared up and down that he would not take back a word he had said, that he meant it all, and would repeat it the first chance he had."

"And how did you settle it with him?"

"Not at all. I ordered him to leave the house, which he did, and I have not seen him since."

"And have you had no relentings toward him?" asked Mr. Appleton, in a grave, reproving tone. "Let me tell you, plainly, you have erred. He was

no doubt much to blame for his rudeness; but you were not present, and the account of it may have been exaggerated. Certainly you were not justified in casting him off in your defence of a stranger, who, after all, may have some motive of her own in not wishing him to be there. I don't like to be uncharitable; but from your own account I think Mrs. Washburn may have been equally to blame with your son. It would have been the best way for her to pass lightly over the first offence, and endeavor to win him by kindness. Don't you see that now you have widened the difficulty between them, and it will be extremely difficult to heal it?"

"Oh, dear! I fear my troubles never will end," exclaimed Mr. Stearns, bitterly. "I acknowledge I was very angry at the time, and in my heart I pledged myself that the drinking fellow should not come into the house again as long as she stayed."

"And did she utter no remonstrance when you made so unnatural a pledge?"

"No, indeed! she was mightily pleased, she said, to see me master in my own house; and the whole

evening she talked and laughed, and flattered up the children till they were ready to eat her up."

Mr. Appleton moved away, apparently disgusted; but presently turned, and said —

"Gilbert, for the sake of old times I advise you at once to get rid of that woman. Send for Alonzo to come home; or you will rue the day you deprived him of the protection of a father's roof. Suppose, for a moment, that your harsh treatment should render him desperate; you are responsible to the public for all the crimes he commits before he is of age. One word more before we part. Let me beg you to review your own conduct, and see whether you have not erred in cherishing anger toward your first-born; whether, with a father's love, you have patiently sought to win him back to the path of virtue; whether you have set him an example worthy of imitation. If not, confess the fault to him and to your Maker. I say again, that there may be a bright sky before you; but it can never appear unless you first seek and obtain the blessing of God."

"Good-day!" exclaimed Mr. Stearns, angrily. "I

dare say you mean well; but I guess I can manage my own business. At any rate, it's too late for me to take your advice."

With these words he walked away.

"What can he mean?" thought Mr. Appleton, slowly pursuing his way in the opposite direction. "Surely, after what he has suffered, he cannot intend to marry one of whom he knows so little."

An emotion of anger stirred his breast that his advice, which had been offered from pure kindness, should have been received in such a spirit; but he checked it at once, and asked himself, "What am I, that I should judge my brother? Who has cast my lot in such pleasant places, and made my life one long dream of happiness, while his has been so bitter? I will not give him up without another effort to save him;" and with a sudden resolve, he turned down another street, and in a few moments rung the bell at Gilbert's door.

"Is Alonzo about the house?" he inquired of the servant who answered his ring.

She laughed almost rudely, saying —

"I will ask Mrs. Washburn."

He followed her into the room, where the woman sat at work fitting a child's dress.

"Is Mr. Stearns or his son at home?" he asked.

"Mr. Stearns has gone to work, and his son does not live here at present," she answered, her face growing very red, and rising in some confusion.

"Do you know whether he has left town?" inquired the gentleman, gravely.

"I don't know anything about him," was the sharp reply.

"I suppose you are the Mrs. Washburn of whom I have heard my friend speak;" he added, with a scarcely perceptible smile.

"Yes, sir," she answered in a softened manner, "wont you take a seat, sir?"

"Thank you; is this your little girl?"

"It is; make your manners, Cynthia, to the gentleman." The child made an awkward courtesy.

"Mary and Annette are at school, I suppose."

"Yes, sir. They go every day mostly, though they don't like learning very well."

"I'm sorry for that. I hope you find them obedient children."

"Yes, sir, they're well enough; all children are troublesome."

"Do you know whether William is expected home?"

"Never, while I'm mistress here," added the woman, for a moment wholly off her guard; but suddenly changing her tone, she continued, "the neighbors tell me he is a perfect fury when he's roused, and that his father never had any faculty at managing him. It is a mystery to me why such children ain't left to die."

"Our Heavenly Father orders life and death according to his own will," said the gentleman, seriously. It does not become us to question his wisdom in the allotments of his providence."

Mrs. Washburn colored and looked steadily at him for a moment, and at length asked —

"Are you the clergyman, sir?"

"No; my name is Appleton. I have been a friend of Mr. Stearns from boyhood."

"What, do you live in that fine place on the hill, opposite the Town Hall?"

"I do," was the smiling reply.

"Well, Mr. Stearns ought to be thankful to have such a friend. He showed me your place as we rode past. Wont you take off your coat, sir, until he comes in?"

"No, I thank you; I only wish to say a few words more, and then I must go. I have been talking with my friend about his unfortunate son. He says he forbade him the house on account of his rudeness to you."

"And that's the truth, sir. In all my days, I never met so contemptible, low-bred a fellow. If he was my own child, I would have done just as his father did."

"I am exceedingly sorry to hear you say so," remarked the gentleman; "for it was my object in coming here to ask your aid in restoring him to his home. I am perfectly convinced my friend will never be happy as long as this separation lasts. He has had many trials; but not one that will equal

this, because his own conscience will accuse him. I do not mean to apologize for the boy, madam," he added, as she began to speak; "I have no doubt he said what was insolent and rude; but he has never been taught to respect his parents, or those in authority over him. If you could have borne with his conduct for a time, until you had opportunity to convince him you were his friend, I think you would have gained his confidence and affection. Only think what a kindness it would have been to the poor afflicted father to see his son turning from his wicked courses and becoming a useful member of society."

"Well, it's too late, now," exclaimed the woman; "and I ain't such a hypocrite as to say but what I'm glad of it. With his comings and goings at all hours of the day and night, he'd have added a sight to the work of the family."

The gentleman rose at once after this speech, and bade Mrs. Washburn good-bye, convinced that it would be spending his breath for naught to make any further appeal to her. As he walked rapidly

toward home, with his whole soul he prayed that his friend might be kept from so fatal a mistake as making this woman his wife. At the risk of offending, he resolved to remonstrate still further against so dreadful a step.

But where was Alonzo? After the angry dismissal from his father's roof, he turned his steps toward the only home left to him. This was the rum-shop kept by the successor of Turner. There he called for glass after glass of spirit, until his senses were completely overpowered, and he sank on the floor, snoring like a brute. The bar-keeper kicked him under the table, and there he lay until the next morning.

In the meantime an anxious consultation was held concerning him. It had been ascertained that he was still under age, and therefore, unless warned by his father to the contrary, the rum-seller was at liberty to swell his account to as large a sum as he pleased, and bring a suit against Mr. Stearns if he refused to pay. It was then his policy to keep the

poor fellow out of sight, and to make him drink as much as possible.

With a body already enfeebled by the use of intoxicating drink, tobacco, and cigars, he could not long endure such treatment; and the very hour when Mr. Appleton was pleading his cause with his father he lay in a small attic over the bar-room, shrieking and tearing his clothes in a fit of delirium tremens. This was rather more than the rum-seller had calculated upon; and he was quite at a loss what to do with his patient. The easiest way was to let him lie there and die; but he feared that course would lead to inquiries he shrank from meeting. Should he send for a physician; or notify his father of his state, and request to have him removed; or send him to the alms-house?

He decided to take the middle course, and sent at once to Mr. Stearns's shop, that his son was thought to be in a dying condition, and if he did not have him removed before night he would be sent to the alms-house.

When this message reached the father, he was sit-

ting in his shop, with a cigar in his mouth, brooding over his late conversation. He had already began to regret the course he had pursued, and felt the first risings of distrust toward the woman who had led him on to turn his son from his house. Then his heart reproached him with unkindness to his friend, who had no other motive than his welfare; and he resolved to take the first opportunity to apologize.

At this moment the messenger entered with his ill-tidings. Mr. Stearns could hardly command his voice to say —

"I will attend to it at once, and have him removed."

When he was alone he staggered back to his seat, and covering his face with his hands sobbed aloud.

"What have I done, worse than others," was his rebellious cry, "that I should be so afflicted? Some men go through life without knowing trial or sorrow, while I have drank the cup to the dregs."

But conscience was aroused at last; and memory set before him the sins of his whole life, especially the violation of vows made at the bed-side of his

dying son, promises to seek the Lord and live a holy life. Perhaps God had now come down upon him in judgment in consequence of his sins. He groaned aloud in anguish of spirit; but suddenly remembering the dreadful task before him, he started forth to seek his dying son.

He had become so accustomed to depend upon his friend Mr. Appleton, in every hour of trial, that he knew not how to proceed without him; and after going the length of two streets turned back, and sought Henry at his own house. The gentleman received him cordially, as if nothing had ever occurred to interrupt their friendship, and invited him into the library where they could be alone.

"No! no!" exclaimed Mr. Stearns, in a husky voice; "you told me I should rue the day when I turned my boy upon the world. How little you or I thought he was dying, then."

"Dying!" cried the other; "where, and how?"

"At Turner's old stand, where I suppose I should have died, long before this, but for you. O, Henry! don't let a hasty word, regretted as soon as spoken,

divide us, but go with me to the poor fellow. I cannot, I dare not, trust myself alone."

Mr. Appleton turned away to hide his sympathizing tears, and in another minute was walking rapidly down the road, by the side of his afflicted friend. On their way he learned all that the father knew of his son's situation. The cause of his sudden illness had not been stated. Whether he had been engaged in a drunken fight and had been dangerously wounded, or whether he had been attacked with a fatal disease — all was conjecture.

"I think," remarked Mr. Appleton, after they had walked on for a moment in silence, "that we ought to let Mrs. Washburn know he will be removed there at once. She will need time, perhaps, to make some hasty preparations."

Mr. Stearns started, and stood for a moment gazing into the countenance of his friend.

"She never will consent," he said, "to have him brought there. What can I, what shall I, do? Advise me, Henry. Oh, dear! I am beset on every side!"

"Calm yourself, Gilbert," said the other, in a decided tone, and taking the bewildered father by the hand. "Be a man, and be master of your house. In mercy to yourself and all connected with you, do not suffer a woman, a stranger, to interfere between you and your duty to your dying child. You do not compel her to stay and take care of him. If she refuses to do so, let her go. You can procure another to fill her place."

"But, you see," faltered Mr. Stearns, in great confusion, "she has a kind of claim there. I regret it now. I really do," as Henry turned away in displeasure; "but I'm afraid I've gone too far to go back."

"Gilbert!" demanded Mr. Appleton, sternly, "will you be a man, or will you not? If you are afraid of the displeasure of your housekeeper now, how much better do you suppose your condition will be after you have married her, than with your late wife?"

"I'll go!" exclaimed Mr. Stearns; "I'll go now, if you'll go with me."

They walked on, Henry confessing to a feeling of contempt for his companion.

"Remember," said he, as they entered the yard, "you are master here, and your child has a claim no stranger can have."

Mrs. Washburn was evidently much surprised at their unexpected appearance, and still more when she heard the errand upon which they had come. She grew very red when the father requested her to prepare a chamber for Alonzo's immediate removal, and appeared as if about to remonstrate.

"I know 'twill increase your care," he added, "but you sha'n't lose anything by it."

"Oh, la!" said she, "at such a time I couldn't give a thought to myself; "I'll have all ready by the time you get him here. Who'd have thought it?"

But they could not stop to hear her moralize, and hastily left her. Mr. Appleton proposed that the father should go at once to his child, while he followed with a carriage.

When Mr. Appleton reached the spot, he saw that for once, the bar-room was deserted; but hearing

screams and cries of distress from the room overhead, he hastily made his way there.

Alonzo was at this moment in one of his paroxysms, and his father, who had entered just as it was coming on, had screamed to the bar-keeper for assistance. At this moment two or three drunken men were endeavoring to steady themselves while they held an arm or a leg of the poor sufferer, and while his father was on the other side of the bed, attempting to hold him down by main force.

What a contrast this scene afforded to the dying chamber of the lovely Francis. Mr. Appleton's heart sank within him as he thought of the soul of the guilty youth thus suddenly called into eternity. He found, upon inquiry, that a physician had not been summoned, and was about to express his indignation, when the rum-seller, hearing some one enter the bar-room, went hastily below.

CHAPTER XI.

THE YOUNG DESIGNER.

"The Lord blesseth the habitation of the just."

The day after his removal, Alonzo remained so calm and free from his wild paroxysms, that his father began to hope he might recover. The physician, too, who had attended his mother and brother, encouraged this hope. Though the attack had been severe, judging from its results, yet the boy was young, and had naturally a good constitution. But he gave it as his decided opinion, that unless the youth made a radical change in his habits, he would soon die. As he found Alonzo conscious and able to hear it, he endeavored to impress him with the certainty that repeated attacks of this kind would be fatal. Under the judicious treatment of the physician, and the constant care of his father, the poor fellow improved every hour. He confessed his

sorrow that he had offended so kind a parent, and promised for the future to abstain entirely from the intoxicating cup. He even went so far as to ask Mrs. Washburn to excuse his hasty words, saying: "I was in drink at the time, and didn't know what language I was using."

Mr. Appleton often called to see him, and thus strengthened him in his good resolutions. As he became decidedly convalescent his friend endeavored to mark out for him a course for his future life. Alonzo had, from a child, been in the habit of working in his father's shop, and was at this time quite familiar with the use of tools. He therefore advised him to seek some situation further back in the country, where he would be away from temptation; and obtain employment as a carpenter. Until he was able to do this, the gentleman urged him to occupy himself in learning to be an accountant, as this would be necessary to his success in business.

While the remembrance of his late sickness was fresh in his mind, and with the certainty that his system could not endure another attack, Alonzo ap-

peared really desirous of leaving forever the wicked companions who had enticed him into sin, and could he but have the earnest affection of a Christian mother to watch over him, his kind friend hoped his reformation would be lasting.

Of late not one word had been spoken between the friends with regard to Mrs. Washburn ; and, indeed, while it was probable that Alonzo would not live, she had been unwearied in her attentions, though his father scarcely left his bedside. But now that he was likely to recover, Mr. Appleton had perceived a change in her deportment. He made no comment upon it, however ; he only cautioned his friend to form no engagement with her from which he could not recede with honor, certainly until he had well considered whether she was calculated to make him and his children happy.

Agnes Appleton deserves a more particular notice than we have given her. At this time she had just entered her twelfth year, was slight in figure like her mother, and had the same transparency of com-

plexion. Her hair was very abundant, and was of that rich shade of auburn which glistens like gold in the sun. This was worn short and curled close around her temples and on her fair neck. Her eyes were dark hazel, shaded by long, heavy lashes; the form of her face and the general expression of her features were like her mother's; but her mouth was formed like her father's, small with some considerable fulness of her lips, denoting firmness when closely shut, but capable of being wreathed into the sweetest of smiles.

She was like her father, too, in disposition, was warm and impulsive in her feelings; but when led away by them to do that which she knew to be wrong, was always ready to express her sincere sorrow and regret.

From the time she was seven years old, she had been learning music of her sister, and could now play almost any piece at sight. Lizzie frankly prophesied that when she was seventeen, she would greatly excel her teacher. But this remained to be seen. In her studies she was quick to learn; indeed,

she, like her brother Frank, seemed to acquire knowledge almost by intuition.

Though dearly beloved and petted by every member of the family, yet there was a peculiar affection between her and Harry — such as is often witnessed between twins. There seemed to be a perfect oneness of thought and feeling; but it was, as their father often playfully remarked, because Harry, who was naturally amiable and yielding, had no will of his own, in whatever concerned her happiness.

"Come, Harry!" she would say, after their return from school, "let's go and swing;" and he would follow her as surely as the needle turns to the pole.

Though perhaps not so much of a scholar as his brother, in proportion to his years, yet this lovely youth was by no means wanting in natural gifts. When only five years of age, he could accomplish wonders with his jack-knife; and since that time had shown such inventive and constructive skill in the mechanism of his toys, such ingenuity in planning his miniature dwellings, that his father purchased him a

complete set of tools, determined to cultivate this faculty by every means in his power.

One summer Mr. Appleton improved the vacation of the children's schools by a leisurely journey through different parts of the State; visiting the principal objects of interest. In one of the largest manufacturing cities he passed several days in critical observations of its curiosities. They went first to the machine shop, where artificers in wood, iron, brass, and other materials, were producing every kind of machinery used in large establishments. Here they lingered hour after hour, while Mr. Appleton, with the gentleman who accompanied the party, explained to Harry the operation of the different wheels and other mechanical powers, and what they were intended to accomplish. Nor could they at length persuade him to leave, until his father promised to come with him again before they left for home.

From this place they visited in turn the carpet, flannel, cotton, and calico factories: in every place the inquisitive boy being eager to learn the manner

by which the machinery was worked to produce so happy a result; and proving by the intelligence of his questions that he understood the great principles of their wonderful art.

During the remainder of their journey, nothing could be thought of but the curious looms, water-wheels, and spinning gins; and no sooner did he reach home than he set himself to work to imitate them as best he could.

From this time he considered his destiny fixed.

"I am to be a machinist," he would often say; "and I will invent something yet which shall render the name of Appleton famous for all time."

When Frank was about fifteen, he one day came walking softly from his own into his mother's chamber, with a small portfolio behind his back.

"I want to tell you a secret, mother," he said, in a low voice; "but I want you to promise not to tell father, or anybody, until I give you leave."

"But, my dear," began his mother, expostulating.

"It's a good secret, mother. I know father will be pleased — only I want to surprise him."

"Well, I consent, then," she replied, with a smile.

"You know last year we went to see the factories," he commenced, sitting down with his portfolio in his lap.

"Yes, dear, I know that."

"Well, do you remember there was one place where a man was engraving on copper from a book of drawings. I asked him what they were for, and he said they were patterns, or designs, he called them, to print calicoes and delaines from. They were funny little dots and sprigs and leaves and all such things, real easy to do — why, I could draw them on the run. Mr. Marchant, who went with us, told father it was a very profitable business; that the designer had a salary of three thousand dollars. When I came home I drew some and showed them to Lizzie, and she thought they were very pretty; but she promised not to tell anybody until I had done a good many. Here they are!" he exclaimed, opening his portfolio and revealing a neat book about six by eight inches in size.

His mother took it from his hands, and was equally

surprised and delighted at the contents. Each page was made to represent one design, drawn with exquisite taste and neatness, while the margin was variously ornamented.

"These are really beautiful!" said the lady, examining and re-examining them. "Oh, what a beauty! this is just like a little cluster of sea-mosses."

Frank, forgetting his secrecy and need of caution, laughed most heartily.

"Why, mother!" he exclaimed, "ever since I began to do them, everything I look at suggests a new pattern. Look here!" and he took from his capacious pocket a smaller book with sketches of leaves, sprigs, and twigs in variety, which he intended at some future time to copy into a larger book.

"But why are you so secret about it?" inquired his mother. "Your father would enjoy your work quite as much as I do."

"Oh, I mean to show it to him sometime; but I want to tell you my plan first. You see, I want to earn some money for myself. I'm fifteen now; and

if I can manage it so as to get my book into the factory as a sample of what I can do, perhaps they'll buy them and employ me to make more. If they do," added the enthusiastic boy, his eyes sparkling and his cheeks flushing with the pleasant anticipation, "I mean to buy a splendid span of black horses, and take you and all the family to ride."

"But how shall you contrive to bring these patterns before the notice of the engraver?" inquired the lady, laughing in sympathy with her boy.

"Oh, I forgot to tell you all! With part of my money I want to learn to engrave; and then I shall be sure of a good salary as long as I live. But I don't know exactly how to plan it about sending them. Lizzie says I had better write to Mr. Marchant, who was so kind to all of us."

"Let me advise you. Tell your father at once; he will send them — that is, if he thinks best."

"But I wanted to wait till I got the money, and see how surprised he would look."

"I think he will be quite as much surprised now. They really do you great credit."

"Would you show them to Harry and Agnes, too? Lizzie has seen them already."

"Yes, I would. Wait till they are together after prayers this evening."

Mr. Appleton was quite as much delighted as his wife had expected, and readily promised to do his utmost toward the furtherance of so worthy an object, while Agnes danced around the room in exultation at having so talented a brother.

As soon as she could get possession of the book she sat down in the bay-window, and called Harry to decide which pattern she should choose for her dress when they were printed, Frank standing quietly looking over her shoulder, bearing his honors very meekly.

The very next day, his father sent the book by express to his friend Mr. Marchant, in L——, with a letter informing him that the designs were executed by his son Frank, who, if they were approved by the Company, would be glad to be occasionally employed by them.

For two weeks not a word was heard in reply,

and the gentleman who remembered his own early experience sufficiently to sympathize in the impatience of his son, consented to send another letter, inquiring after the fate of the former, when an envelope was brought from the office with the postmark L—— upon it.

The letter, however, was only an invitation from Mr. Marchant to Frank and his brother, to come and pass a few days with him in the city.

"Oh, I'm so glad Harry is to go, too!" shouted the excited boy. "What do you suppose he wants us for, father? Shall we start this afternoon, or wait until to-morrow?"

Mr. and Mrs. Appleton laughed heartily, and the gentleman remarked that he supposed there was no pressing need of haste.

"You may go as soon as your mother can get you ready," he added; "but be careful to form no definite arrangements for the future without first consulting us."

"If you come home with the black span," said

Lizzie, with an arch smile, "do be careful not to break your necks."

The result of this visit was an increased determination on the part of Henry to be a machinist, and an ardent desire to distinguish himself by a useful invention; most of his time having been spent in the examination of different kinds of looms and the power for working them. With Frank the result was more definite. His designs had been immensely praised, and he himself had received marked attention. In addition to this, he had received intimations that at no distant day his taste and ingenuity might be required, the designer employed by the Company having given notice of his intention to change his business.

Then they had been hospitably entertained by their father's friend, and had enjoyed the visit highly, though obliged to return by a train of cars instead of being whirled along at a rapid rate by a span of black colts.

CHAPTER XII.

LEAVING HOME.

"The just man walketh in his integrity; his children are blessed after him."

"FATHER, have you time to talk with me a few minutes?" inquired Lizzie Appleton, entering the library one evening, where her father sat reading.

"Certainly, my daughter," was his gentle reply.

"I want your consent to a plan I have formed," continued Lizzie. "You say I have succeeded so well in teaching Agnes, I should like to try my skill with a few other scholars."

"To assure yourself whether she learned by intuition, as you often say; or whether any of the credit of her really fine playing may be ascribed to yourself — this is your reason, I suppose?" remarked the gentleman, his eye twinkling with suppressed merriment.

Lizzie laughed.

"I expected you'd quiz me, papa," she said, playfully; "but I'm really in earnest about it."

"So I see, my dear. But seriously, don't I give you enough pin-money to buy ribbons and belts with? or what is your motive?"

"I'm going to tell you all about it, father," she answered, her tone becoming grave. "Ever since I began to love the Saviour, I have been thinking I ought to do more for him. I have lain awake for hours wondering how I could do something to show my gratitude for all that he has done for me. Sometimes I have wanted to be a missionary, but I know I am not good enough for that. Then I thought I could be useful here; and that was the reason that I began the Sabbath-school among the poor Germans. But that is so little, and it is no sacrifice at all to me. I want to do something myself; and last night it all came to me so plain that I could teach music, — which you say is my gift, — and then I can give the money to the missionaries to do good with. You know," she added, as her father did not speak, "that it is not my

giving when I put money into the contribution-box or sign for some benevolent object, it is yours; and I have so good a home, and every wish of my heart supplied, that I have no opportunity for any self-denial or sacrifice."

Mr. Appleton opened his arms and folded his daughter closely to his heart.

"Dear child," he murmured, "you have my full and hearty consent to so good a work. I have often delighted in your peculiar gift, and have thanked God for bestowing it upon you; but never more than now, when I see you desirous of devoting it to the service of your Saviour. But you never need despond, my daughter, while there are so many opportunities all around you for doing good. In the first place, there is a great field for you without going out of the house. A sister's influence is all-powerful; and I am happy to know that in your case it is exerted to lead your brothers and sister in the path of virtue and holiness. They know you profess to be governed by higher motives; and they naturally watch closely your actions to see

if they come up to the Bible standard. Nor is this confined to the members of your own family. Your young companions, of both sexes, are looking to you, and to every Christian professor, to see if there is any reality to their religion, — whether it is a mere profession, or whether it enters into the heart and purifies the life."

"I have felt all this, dear father, and often mourn that I am not more consistent. Sometimes I fear I am too lively."

"In that respect, my dear daughter, I cannot point you to a better example than your mother. She is always cheerful, yet her mirth never rises to levity. But here she comes; have you disclosed to her your plans?"

"Only in part. I wished first to obtain your consent; for I knew she would at once consult you."

And Lizzie glanced lovingly from one of her parents to the other, as if proud of their mutual confidence and affection. She then told them that she was sure of at least one scholar, as a friend had

recently told Marion Lang that she wished for just such a teacher as Agnes Appleton had; she was sure her daughter would then advance quite rapidly.

Harry was now in his eighteenth year. He had some time before this graduated at the High School, and had then been for two terms to an academy in an adjoining town. For a few months he had assisted his father in his writing; but now thought it high time he should settle in some business. He was tall and rather inclined to be portly, like his father. In addition to this there had of late been decided symptoms of a moustache; so that altogether he began to feel that he was a man.

Agnes teased him incessantly about this appendage to his lip, begging him to be careful of it for her sake; that it was young and tender, and needed constant nursing. Agnes had just come into her teens; but was quite small and delicate in form, though sprightly and active to an extreme. She was the baby, and therefore all felt justified in petting and spoiling her to their hearts' content.

She was so full of fun and frolic, so enthusiastic and ardent, that it was in vain her mother tried to render her subdued and quiet like her sister. Years had only increased her affection for Harry, who, in spite of her teasing, she regarded as the noblest and handsomest and best brother that ever lived.

"Why, mamma!" she exclaimed one day, "I do believe that when he is as old, Harry will be quite as handsome as father himself."

She could say no more; for her father was her beau ideal of all beauty and excellence in a man, as her mother was in a woman.

Mr. Appleton agreed with his son that he was old enough to decide upon his future business; and as the youth had never swerved from his desire to enter a machine shop, he gave him a letter to their old friend Mr. Marchant, and sent him to L—— to seek his fortune.

Mrs. Appleton proposed that her husband should accompany him; but the father thought it best the boy should learn to depend upon himself.

"But in the selection of a boarding-place," she urged, "you would be there to advise him."

"Mr. Marchant will do that quite as well as I should. I have already instructed him with regard to the company he should associate with, and I have too much faith in the divine promise, — 'train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it,' — to suppose that he will yield readily to temptation. We have endeavored to impress upon him the duties he owes himself, as well as those he owes his Maker. If he were only renewed in heart, I should have nothing more to ask for him. But he has been a child of many prayers; the rest we must leave with him and his God."

Before they parted, Mrs. Appleton drew her son to her room, and gave him such counsels as can only fall from the lips of a warm-hearted, Christian mother. She promised him if he succeeded in obtaining employment, that Agnes should make a long-promised visit to the daughter of Mr. Marchant; and begged him to form no acquaintance with any young man or woman with whom he should

be unwilling for her to associate. She assured him that every morning and every night, as they drew round the family altar, his name would be associated with theirs, and a blessing implored in his behalf.

"And now, my dear Harry," she said, kissing his forehead, "you know that the great, almost the only desire of my heart for you is, that you may be a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus; that you may live and labor for him who gave his life for you. For this blessing, I shall pray every day until we meet again."

The poor boy wept as his mother thus addressed him, and resolved to begin at once to seek religion. He threw his arms round her neck, kissed her again and again, and told her he had never known before how much he loved her. He thanked her for all her tenderness and love, and asked her to forgive him that he had been so unmindful of her wishes; and then tore himself away, to bid adieu to the loved ones waiting below.

His father and Frank were to accompany him to the station; but before he left, Mr. Appleton placed

in his hand a well-filled pocket-book, advising him to leave the most of the money it contained in the hands of their friend, for safe keeping.

Lizzie's lip quivered as she bade her brother adieu. She felt keenly this first breaking-up of their family-circle. Unperceived by him, she placed a small note in his vest pocket, in which she had poured out all the feelings of her heart for him. She closed by saying —

"Remember, dear brother, that you will have the same God and the same Saviour in L—— whom we have at home, and that he is equally ready to bless you there as here."

This note Harry did not perceive until the next Sabbath, when he was fairly established in his new boarding-place. He had retired to his room for the night, home-sick and heart-sick, absolutely yearning for one glimpse of his mother, or one sympathizing word from the dear home friends. He put his finger carelessly in his pocket for his pencil, and noticed that a paper fell to the floor. He took it up, recognized the penmanship, and eagerly commenced its

perusal. But his eyes grew dim, the fountain of his grief was broken up, and Harry, man in stature as he was, threw himself on the bed and wept like a child.

It was some minutes before he could compose himself sufficiently to finish the note; but when he did, it was with a full determination to choose God as his Father, and Christ as his portion and inheritance.

Thus God answers the prayers of his people.

Let us now turn back to the time when another son went forth from his father's roof. As I stated in the last chapter, Alonzo, when recovering from his dangerous illness, made many resolutions of amendment. He had been near enough to the brink of a dreadful precipice to feel sure that if once over the edge, he should sink to rise no more. He shuddered when he thought how near he had been to eternity, and how unprepared he was to meet God. When Francis was dying, he, with his father, had promised him that he would make the

salvation of his soul his first and great business. How could he meet him at the bar of God with his part of the promise unfulfilled! But if he allowed his senses to be overpowered by the intoxicating cup, how could he do this? He determined to avoid intemperance, as his greatest enemy.

Mr. Stearns's sister Lucy was married, and resided in a country town about fifty miles distant. Though for a long time all correspondence between them had ceased, he now wrote her to inquire whether a situation could be obtained for his son in her vicinity. After some delay, she found an opportunity for him as journeyman; and wrote that, if he wished, he could board in her family. She seemed much pleased at this renewal of their correspondence; and closed by saying that she had heard of the death of Francis, and sympathized with her brother in the loss of so dutiful a son; that if Alonzo resembled him, she should regard it as a great favor to have him in her family, for the sake of his influence upon her children.

Mr. Stearns read and re-read this letter; and

doubted whether he ought to take advantage of his sister's kindness by sending a son who had early distinguished himself by his vices. But Alonzo, on hearing the letter, remonstrated against his father's wish to inform his sister of the past, pledging himself so to conduct for the future that she would regard him with the respect and affection she now entertained for his deceased brother.

Preparations were now speedily made for his departure; and it is but justice to Mrs. Washburn to say she did her part well. She cut and made shirts and overalls; Mary and Annette hemmed pocket-handkerchiefs and cravats; and at length all was ready.

The parting-hour arrived. His trunk was packed, and stood ready for the wagon to take it to the cars. Mrs. Washburn took her hand from the flour, wiped it on her apron, and said —

"I wish you well."

His sisters shook his hand, as they pronounced their good-bye; and his father, who followed him to the door, and gave him money to pay his fare, said —

"Keep up your pluck; stick to your good resolutions; and you'll be sure to do well."

And so this son left the parental roof to commence his struggle with the world, without one prayer in his behalf: no mother to commit him with faith and hope to the care of a covenant-keeping God; no father to supplicate the blessing of heaven upon his future course; no sister or brother to win him by their love to trust in Christ, his elder brother.

Would God uphold him in his hour of need?

CHAPTER XIII.

THE UNFORTUNATE SON.

"It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman."

The conduct of Mrs. Washburn during the sickness and convalescence of Alonzo had been such, that Mr. Stearns felt himself justified in his first opinion of her. His own fear of her reproaches, at the time of his great distress, would have led him, but for the firmness of Mr. Appleton, to have had his son conveyed to any other place rather than to his own home. At that time he realized his danger in trusting his happiness to one of whose principles he knew so little; and sincerely regretted that in his great delight at finding himself in a comfortable, peaceful home, he had given her reason to hope that she could remain there for life. He had, in consequence, grown more cool in his manner toward her,

while she, on the contrary, was more unwearied in her efforts to please him. In truth, she had found his so pleasant a place compared to the one she had left, that she was quite willing to make a sacrifice of her own feelings for a time, in order to obtain it permanently. In the case of Alonzo, the conversation of Mr. Appleton had convinced her that she had overrated her own influence ; and she determined, if it should be necessary, to propose herself that Alonzo be permitted to return. This, she thought, if his friend had stated his feelings correctly, would be a master-stroke, and bring the father more into her power than ever. And this was why she so readily consented to prepare for his removal from the rum-seller's shop, when informed of his dangerous illness.

For a few days she had perceived a favorable change in Mr. Stearns's manner toward her. He had talked more with Cynthia, and suggested that she be sent to school with his daughters. He had proposed a ride, saying she had been too closely confined during Alonzo's sickness. She began to be

sure if she played her cards aright, that she should win a husband for herself and a home for her child. Cynthia was now better clothed than she had ever been, and had begun to attend school. Mr. Stearns had obtained a good woman by the name of Hannah to do the work in the kitchen, so that her days passed swiftly away in the enjoyment of ease and plenty. Mary and Annette were quiet, inoffensive children, quite satisfied if they were treated kindly, even happy when they contrasted their situation with their early years; while their father was coming every day to the conclusion that he could not do better than to make Mrs. Washburn his wife.

One evening, late in the autumn, he returned from his shop, resolved to settle this matter with his housekeeper before he retired to rest; and if she had been aware of this resolution, the woman could not have been more anxious to conciliate him. He found the table spread with neatness and abundance, his wishes, as far as he had ever expressed them, strictly consulted in the cooking of the food, his little girls sitting quietly at their work, while Cyn-

thia ran to assist her mother, who was hastening the tea.

"This is my idea of a home," he exclaimed, with emphasis, taking off his outer coat, which was dripping with the rain, and hanging it on a chair by the fire; "this seems pleasant indeed!"

Cynthia, at her mother's bidding, ran to get his shoes and carry his wet boots to their place by the kitchen stove. When she returned he detained her taking her upon his knee.

"How should you like to live always with mē and be my little girl?" he asked, glancing as he spoke at the flushed cheeks of the mother.

"I should like to stay, if mother does," replied the child.

"That's right, Cynthia," he answered, laughing heartily.

Since noon there had been a powerful rain, which increased in fury as the evening set in. But the storm outside only made the enjoyment in-doors greater by contrast.

"I pity those poor fellows who have no comfort in

their homes," cried Mr. Stearns, drawing his chair nearer the cheerful fire, as a loud blast of wind made the windows and blinds rattle. "I've had bitter experience sufficient to know how to appreciate smiling faces and kind words of welcome. It's hard enough to labor all day without coming home at night to meet a storm of reproaches."

The widow fully agreed with him in all that he said.

"I'm glad, I'm sure," she remarked, "you're satisfied with what little I can do. But as I often tell Cynthia, Mr. Stearns is very easy to please, so we must do our best."

At this moment the back door opened, and the wind blew in so furiously that it interrupted what farther she had to say. Mr. Stearns arose to go through the kitchen in order to shut and fasten it, but he had not reached the entry when he suddenly started and called out —

"Why, William! how in the name of wonder did you get here?"

The cry brought the whole family to the spot time

enough to see that, instead of replying, the boy lay down on the mat in front of the kitchen stove, panting with exhaustion. He was indeed a pitiable object. He had on no hat or outer garment, and his long hair, dripping with the rain, hung loosely over his forehead and face; his clothes were soiled and torn, and his shoes thin and sopping with wet. His wretched appearance moved his father's heart, and he exclaimed again —

"My poor boy, where did you come from, this dreadful night?"

"They beat me, and I ran away," said William, beginning to cry. "I'm hungry, and cold too."

He spoke in a subdued tone, as if suffering from fear.

"Well, you shall have enough to eat now you've got home. There, don't cry so!" urged the father, as the voice of kindness seemed to reassure the child, so that he sobbed aloud. "Run up stairs, Mary, and get a blanket to wrap your poor brother in; he's shivering and blue with the cold. Mrs. Washburn, wont you bring a cup of hot tea?"

The woman, as soon as she realized that this was William who had returned to his father's roof, had stood trying to decide how to conduct herself in such an emergency. She was determined, if she had power to expel him, it should be done at once. She would bring before Mr. Stearns the alternative, "he goes forever or I do," not doubting for a moment that he would decide at once in her favor. These thoughts darted quickly through her mind; so that when he asked her to bring the tea, she walked deliberately into the sitting-room, and taking her knitting from the table, sat down as coolly as if she had not heard the question.

In the meantime, Mr. Stearns proceeded to strip the boy of his clothes, — William crying incessantly that his back was sore, and it hurt him; one child running for a shirt, another for a piece of flannel to rub him dry, — when, to the father's horror and indignation, large ridges and scars appeared on his flesh, showing that he had been whipped most unmercifully.

"Who did this?" he cried out, in a loud, angry

tone; "I'll sue them for assault and battery: tell me, William. I promise you shall never go there again."

"Uncle Sam beats me every day," sobbed the poor boy. "Oh! you'll kill me!" he shrieked out, as his father in his excitement tried to pull off the sleeve of his shirt.

"O heaven! what a sight!" exclaimed Hannah, gazing with horror at the bruised and lacerated arm. "Where has the child been, to be treated so cruelly?"

Mr. Stearns groaned aloud.

"Why, how you shake! you poor, abused child! Mrs. Washburn, why don't you bring the tea?"

The woman knit the faster, but made no reply.

"Annette, go see where Mrs. Washburn is, and tell her to come and help me get this poor, suffering boy up stairs. Hannah, you take some hot stones and warm the bed in my room as quick as you can, Why don't she come? He shakes as if he was in an ague fit."

"Mrs. Washburn's knitting in there," said An-

nette, returning from the sitting-room. "She hasn't stirred about the tea yet."

For the first time it flashed into the father's mind that she had shown no interest in his boy, together with his promise to her that William should remain away. His eyes snapped as he said —

"Mary, tell Mrs. Washburn to come here: tell her I say so."

The doors were open, and the woman heard the decided tone, and thought it not best to refuse.

"Didn't I tell you to get some tea for this poor, abused boy?"

"I have nothing to do with the child," replied the woman. "The tea is on the table, where you can get it; or you may call on one of your girls to give it to you. I may as well tell you first as last, Mr. Stearns, I leave your house to-night and forever, or he does."

"Be off, then — bag and baggage!" shouted the incensed father in a voice of thunder, throwing the blanket round William and laying him gently on the rug. "If you're such a fiend that you feel no com-

passion for a poor, motherless, forsaken, abused child, you're not the woman I want in my house; and I thank God that he opened mine eyes before I spoke the words I meant to have said this very night. Now be off! The quicker you are out of my house the better."

Mrs. Washburn, finding she had made a mistake, began to cry; but it was too late to appeal to his sympathy.

Mr. Stearns went to the table, poured out some warm drink, and gently as a mother lifted his child, and held the cup while he eagerly drained its contents.

"More, I want more — I'm hungry," whimpered the boy.

"As soon as I can get you warm in bed, dear, you shall have as much as you can drink."

"And you wont let her beat me?" cried the child, pointing to the place where Mrs. Washburn stood, with her apron to her face. "Uncle Sam most kills me, he does."

"Nobody shall hurt you, dear. I'll take care of you, and see that you're well treated after this."

"You don't really mean for me to go out of the house such a night as this!" exclaimed Mrs. Washburn, checking her sobs.

"No worse for you to go out than for William, whom you was so anxious to turn into the street. Remember it was your own proposal. You'd better be picking up your things; and I'll have a wagon ready to carry you home, though you don't deserve such kindness."

Finding her case was hopeless, the woman turned upon him with a torrent of abuse, telling him he was a brute and a tyrant, and that it was no wonder his wife had died of a broken heart, with such a passionate husband.

Leaving her in the midst of her loud talk, Mr. Stearns took William in his arms and carried him to the chamber. where Hannah had kindled a fire and warmed the bed.

"He seems so sick I hate to leave him," said the distressed father, turning to the sympathizing girl. "I don't like to ask you to go out in the rain; but here's half a dollar if you'll run to the end of the

street and tell the stable-keeper to send a covered wagon here, with a boy to drive it three miles out of town. Tell him who sent you; and say that I want the boy to go first for the doctor, and ask him to come here right away."

"I'll go and welcome," replied Hannah; "sure you've always been good to me, and I'll be glad to help rid the house of such a varmint."

At the end of another hour Mrs. Washburn and her daughter drove away from the door, which but for her anger and brutal conduct would have been open to her forever. Mr. Stearns had time, during the silent watches of the long night, while he sat by his suffering son, to thank God for having delivered him from such a curse as she must have proved to him and his.

CHAPTER XIV.

SETTLING IN LIFE.

"All things work together for good to them that love God."

Harry Appleton had been in his new situation scarcely six months when the vacancy so long anticipated occurred. Mr. Marchant was desired to inform his young friend that if he still wished to occupy the station of designer, he must apply at once. In anticipation of this event, Frank had been gradually increasing his stock, until he had now on hand a large pile of books like the one he had shown his mother.

Mr. Appleton was now recognized as one of the first architects in the country, and found the skill of his son as an artist of great advantage to him. But this was too favorable an opening to be refused. He gave his full consent, therefore, to the proposition, on condition that he could be at home a

part of the time, his mother being unwilling to have him wholly away from parental restraint at so early an age.

In company with his wife, he went with Frank to L——, where they had the satisfaction of learning of Harry's success in his business, his employers speaking of his mechanical skill in the highest terms; and also, before the close of the second day, of knowing that Frank had obtained a situation as designer for the large manufacturing company.

Lizzie was now in her twenty-first year, the age when her parents had consented that a matrimonial engagement should be formed between her and the younger brother of Mr. Lang, an attachment having existed between them for many years. The wedding was not expected to take place for several months, the gentleman in the meantime proposing to put up a house upon a site near his brother's.

Soon after Harry left home, Agnes went to a distant city to finish her education at a celebrated school for young ladies; and now, at the close of a

year, had been requested to remain as an assistant teacher in music and drawing. She wrote for her parents' consent, as the arrangements must be made before the close of the existing term. But they had been looking eagerly forward to her arrival at home, and could not endure the thought of her continued absence, especially as her sister was so soon to leave home.

Leaving Lizzie engaged in preparing her wedding trosseau, we will turn to the daughter of Mr. Stearns, who had for several years been in a milliner's shop in the city.

After the sudden expulsion of Mrs. Washburn from his house, Mr. Stearns found that Hannah was fully capable of doing all the work in his family; but he wanted a companion at the table and by the fireside; and besides this he needed a person who would exercise a mild but decided influence over his poor William, whom he was determined should never again leave home. His thoughts at length fixed upon his daughter Phebe, and he

wrote her at once, offering every inducement if she would return home. He reminded her that he was a man that had known many trials; and he now longed to gather his children about him, and spend the remainder of his days in the quiet enjoyment of the blessings God had left him.

The answer to this letter, so impatiently waited for, at length arrived. Phebe had formed an engagement of marriage with a young man in the city.

"Upon the receipt of your letter," she wrote, "I asked his advice about going home; but he is not willing that I should be so far away from him, as it would be an injury to his business to leave oftener than once in several months. I am sorry for you, father," she added, "and as, if I went, I could stay but a short time, I should think it would be a good plan for you to find some nice woman, and marry her." She then closed by saying, "If you are willing, I should like to go home to get ready to be married, as it would save my paying board while I am earning nothing; but I should be very busy, and could not attend to anything about the house."

Mr. Stearns sighed heavily as he folded this letter and replaced it in the envelope.

"It is hard," said he to himself, "that I cannot have any comfort in my children. There's Henry, who began life poorer than I was, and seemingly had far more to contend with in making his way in the world; but just contrast his condition with mine. He has kept right straight on, ever since he was a boy, higher and higher every year, until now there is not a man in town more respected than Mr. Appleton. Whenever a public office is vacant, or any town business to be done, nobody can fill the place so well, or do it so much to the acceptance of the people, as Mr. Appleton. Then look at him in his family. Never was there a man who had a better wife or more obedient, dutiful children. One after another of them, as they grow up, take their station in society, and in the best society too; and bid fair to be prospered in everything they lay their hands to, as their father did before them; while mine have so far been only a disgrace to all connected with them —

that is, if I except my poor Francis. Well, I suppose all that was good in him was owing to Henry and his wife. It don't seem hardly fair and right. Not that I have any hard feelings against my old friend for stepping right over my head, as it were. Many men in his place would have long ago turned a cold shoulder against one situated as I am."

He sat gazing into the fire, his head resting on his hand, his thoughts rapidly reviewing the past. Henry Appleton and he were boys again, one of them a frequenter of the bar-room, or idling away his time lounging about the streets, in search of amusement; the other at home, diligently employed in storing his mind with knowledge. On the Sabbath, the older one wanders in the field, occasionally going to church a part of the day, or amusing himself, and wearing away the sacred hours by some low game with the workmen upon the farm. The other accompanies his grandmother to the house of God, attends the Sabbath-school, where he treasures up divine truth, returns to the quiet fireside, where

he eagerly listens to the instructions of his aged relative. Then when they are about to choose their business for life, one of them passes the required number of hours in the shop, and then devotes his evening to visiting places of amusement, attending balls, or parties of pleasure. The other gives up all recreation, and by self-denial and sacrifice earns money to buy books, and fits himself for a higher sphere of usefulness. The first is honest, industrious, and upright in his dealings with his fellow-men; but ah! here must be the difference, after all —the other is honest in his dealings with his Maker. In all that he does this is apparent. He seeks first of all the kingdom of heaven, and all other things are added unto him.

The poor man rises from his seat, opens a small drawer in the book-case, and takes from thence a small Bible, looking soiled and worn from constant use, and turning to the fly-leaf reads, "Francis Stearns, from his sincere friend, Susy Appleton." He sighs again—oh, how heavily! as he calls to mind the last time he held that little volume in

his hands. It was the night before his dear boy breathed out his soul to God. He thought his hour had come, but still he was not quite prepared to go. His work on earth was not quite accomplished. He requested his father to prop him up in bed. Then, with his pale fingers between the leaves of the blessed book, he told his father that the truths it contained sustained him in that trying hour, and begged him, for the sake of his dying son, to read it, and make the salvation of his soul his first and chief business. Nor was he satisfied until his brother Alonzo and his sister Phebe would also pledge themselves to embrace Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Redeemer.

"Oh!" cried the self-condemned father, "I have broken my vow to my dying boy. No wonder God visits me with trial and sorrow. If we had each done this how different might now have been my situation, even as regards the comforts of this life! Alonzo would have escaped the sickness that so nearly carried him out of the world, and have joined me in business, relieving me of care and

anxiety; and Phebe would have remained at home to cheer my solitary days and to help train up her little sisters to be useful and happy women. Here," said he, the tears beginning to roll down his cheeks, "are the very verses the dear boy marked for me to read."

He opened to the Psalms, and read from the little slip of paper placed between the leaves the ninety-second psalm, from the twelfth verse :

"The righteous shall flourish like a palm-tree; he shall grow like a cedar of Lebanon. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to show that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him."

Then turning to the next place, he read —

"Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner."

Letting fall the book upon the table, the poor man covered his face, and cried out in the anguish of his heart, —

"I am recompensed. Lord, I acknowledge that

thou art just. I am the guilty sinner who has rebelled against thy commands, and I deserve thy judgments."

He sat thus till near midnight, communing with his own heart — alternately reading from the small Bible, and crying to God for mercy.

We know that God never turns a deaf ear to such a cry.

When Alonzo reached his aunt's house, he was much disappointed to find that, instead of pleasant associates in her family, there were only two large, rude-looking girls, and a boy many years younger than himself. His uncle, too, was a rough, stern man, with a loud, commanding voice, who seemed to regard him as an intruder. He determined on the first opportunity to change his boarding-place for one more congenial; but, concealing his real feelings, he answered all his aunt's questions concerning his father, the particulars of his mother's death, and many others relating to the present state of the family.

The next day he went to his work. But before a week had elapsed, he found that more was required of him than he had either strength or skill to perform. He proposed to work part of the time for lower wages; but his employer needed a man such as he had been represented to be, a first-rate hand, capable of taking a job and carrying it on. He soon found employment in a neighboring town, and worked at it for several months, in the same shop with a man by the name of Washburn. In the intimacy created by being constantly together, Alonzo told him that his father had a housekeeper by the same name, if she had not already changed it for the shorter one of Stearns. This led on to inquiries, until the young man ascertained, beyond a doubt, that Mrs. Washburn was not a widow, as she affirmed, but wife of this very man, who had left her on account of her violent temper. She had often declared she wished he were dead; and one day he left her to take care of herself and child as well as she could.

The first news Mr. Stearns received from his son,

was this fact contained in a letter; but it came after she had gone, and only served to increase his thankfulness that he had been preserved from so dreadful an evil.

Alonzo also stated that he was doing well, though wages were very low; that so far he had held to his promise not to drink any kind of liquor; that indeed he had no temptation to do so, as there was not a rum-shop in the town.

Upon the receipt of this letter, the father was so much delighted that he went directly to impart the good tidings to his friend Mr. Appleton, and ask his advice with reference to the boy's immediate return, for the sake of going into business with him. But this Mr. Appleton thought not wise. His former companions might meet him and entice him to his old haunts; while at present he was away from temptation, and every week his good resolutions were strengthening and gaining ground.

"Keep up your courage, my dear friend," he said. "This is the beginning of good things for you.

Trust in the Lord that he will hear your prayers for yourself and your family."

Mr. Stearns therefore wrote his son that Mrs. Washburn had sometime previous left his house, expressing great pleasure in hearing so good an account of his prospects, and enclosing two ten-dollar bills, with promises of doing well by him if he continued industrious and sober.

In a postscript he said —

"I have opened my letter to tell you that Jim Morrison, who used to be with you at Turner's, was found dead last night in the street. He had been drinking freely, and it is supposed he died in a fit, trying to reach home."

He closed by saying —

"My dear boy, I have at last begun to pray; and every night, before I go to bed, I ask God to help you keep the promise you made to your dying brother."

CHAPTER XV.

THE MOTHER'S DEATH.

"The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."

We must here pass over a period of five years. Lizzie Appleton, now Mrs. Lang, and her two children — Frederick, named for his father, and Susy, for her grandmother — had been spending the day at her former home, from which place she returned after tea with her husband, having left her friends in the enjoyment of their usual health.

About midnight she was startled by a loud ring of the door-bell, and a messenger saying that her mother was dangerously ill. Scarcely stopping to protect herself from the night air, she flew, rather than ran across the street and up the avenue to the front entrance. Here a heart-rending scene awaited her. In one of the spacious chambers looking out upon the lawn, the whole family were assembled.

Mr. Appleton sat upon the bed, his countenance exhibiting a deathly pallor, supporting his wife, and wiping the great drops, which the dreadful agony caused to gather upon her forehead. Frank stood just before them, holding camphor to her nostrils, while Agnes walked frantically about the room, wringing her hands as she cried out —

"O, doctor, don't give up! can't you save her?"

As his daughter entered, her father glanced at her with an expression of agony such as she never forgot. Controlling her emotion, she advanced quickly to the bedside, and took her mother's hand in hers. It was already cold and clammy. She began to understand that this was death. She ran quickly from the room, and in a distant part of the house threw herself upon her knees, crying —

"Oh, my God, teach my heart to acquiesce in this dreadful affliction; help me to say, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.'"

On her return, the powerful anodynes administered by the physician were beginning to take effect.

The poor sufferer met her daughter's glance with a feeble smile of recognition, and presently whispered the words —

"Thank God, my dear — all is peace with me. Comfort and sustain your father."

Mr. Appleton groaned aloud.

"Oh, my Father!" he cried, "if it be possible, let this bitter cup pass from me; but," he presently added, "if I must drink it, help me to say, 'thy will be done.'"

The doctor now drew near to feel her pulse.

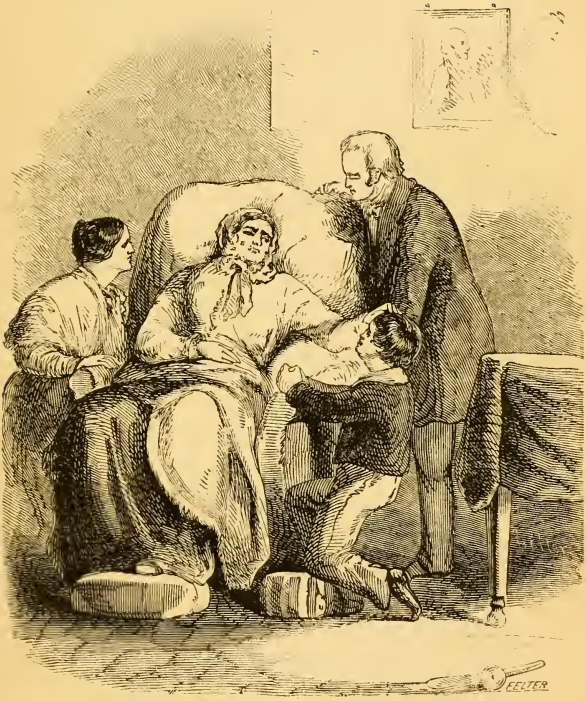
"How much longer shall I be here?" asked the dying woman in a calm, collected voice.

"Half an hour at longest," replied the good man, frankly, at the same time wiping his eyes.

"So soon!" she repeated.

She then closed her eyes, and seemed for a moment engaged in prayer. When she opened them she motioned for Frank to come near.

"My dear boy," she began, "my breath is short; but I cannot leave the world without telling you once more that there is nothing I desire for you, ex-



"Thank God my dear, all is peace with me."—p. 230.

cept that your feet may be found walking in the path of holiness. Will you endeavor so to live as to meet me there?" raising her eyes to heaven.

The weeping youth could only bow his assent.

"Lizzie, my beloved daughter, to your dutiful care I leave your father. Agnes is soon to form other connections. When that is the case, if he wishes it, I should like to have you come home with your family, so that you can be near him and administer to his comfort. Tell your brother Henry it has been my daily prayer that he might be as good and useful a Christian as his father has been. I rejoice to feel that you and he, and all of you," glancing toward Frank, "will meet me in heaven."

Agnes, in obedience to a glance from her mother, tried to check her sobs and approached the bed.

"Dear Agnes," murmured the mother, "you have been a good child. Tell James, I am sure one who has made so loving a daughter, will make an affectionate, dutiful wife. But never forget, my dear, that such an hour as this will come to you, as well as to all. Live so as to meet it calmly and joy-

fully. Now Frank, relieve your father, and let me look upon his dear face once more before I go."

The weeping youth gently lifted her shoulders, and let her head rest upon his arm. The agonized husband sank on the floor before her, but it was a full minute before he could lift his pale, haggard face to hers. She put her cold hand on his head, and said gently —

"Can't you give me up, Henry? Jesus, my Saviour, calls me, and I have no sorrow except at leaving you."

"O God;" cried the poor man in an agony of grief, "put underneath me thine everlasting arm! Support me or I shall sink! My beloved wife, my darling Susy, how can I walk through the rest of my life's journey unless you are by my side. How can I look upon your closed eyes, and feel assured they will never open more; that I shall never more hear your glad voice, nor see your quiet smile of affection?"

His stout form swayed to and fro with the violence of his sorrow.

The dying wife gazed upon him for a moment,

while a tear moistened her eye, and then whispered —

"Henry, remember I've always loved you, and blessed God every day of my life for giving me such a husband to lead and strengthen me in the path of duty. I have been a poor, guilty sinner, but Christ will wash away all my stains, and present me spotless before his Father. One more adieu, dearest of earthly friends! I'm almost home!"

Frank felt her head settling more heavily upon his arm, and screamed out —

"She's gone!"

But in a moment, with a sweet smile, she murmured —

"Tell Harry I send him my blessing." Then folding her hands peacefully upon her breast, and with the words, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," her freed soul burst from its tenement of clay, and fled away to rest forever in the bosom of her Lord.

Thus tenderly did the Saviour lead this sheep of his flock home to his heavenly fold.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CONCLUSION.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children."

After the painful separation recorded in the last chapter, it was often said of Mr. Appleton that he was more than ever devoted to the service of God. He became doubly watchful over himself, sometimes saying to Agnes, with a quivering lip —

"I used to feel safe; knowing that when I strayed your mother would gently point out my error."

He enlarged the stream of his sympathies and his benevolence, and was always ready to weep with those who wept; though for a long time he could hardly be said to rejoice even with those that rejoiced.

Lizzie never forgot her mother's dying injunction. With filial tenderness and affection she soothed and

comforted her father in his sorrow; and when, after an interval of fifteen years, he was gathered to his fathers, like a shock of corn fully ripe, she stood by his pillow and pointed him to the Saviour who sustained and comforted her mother in her dying hour.

Many of those standing around were deeply impressed by the calmness and serenity with which this good man surrendered his soul to God; and left the solemn scene calling to mind the words: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

His sons grew up honored and respected. Harry became part owner of the large establishment where he first worked, and settled with his family in the city of L——; while Frank, at his father's decease, took possession of his house and retained a part of his business — his sister, Mrs. Lang, having previously returned to her former home.

Agnes — afterward Mrs. James Hubbard — returned after her marriage to the city where she had attended school, and where she had made the acquaintance of her husband.

Thus each and all of these dear children exemplified in their own life and experience, God's faithfulness to his promise: "I will show mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments."